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TO OUR READERS:

In compliance with the Israeli military authorities, and under the guise of the much criticized "Emergency Regulations" of 1945, Al-Fajr is required to submit all material prepared for publication in this weekly, and also in the Arabic Daily and Bi-Weekly Hebrew Edition, to the Israeli censorship authorities, who use this blanket authority excessively. The material appearing on pages labeled with letters has all been censored and expunged by the Israeli authorities. We found it necessary and relevant to publish it on these pages in the foreign edition.

Israel-US Pact Brings War with Syria Closer

by Livia Rokach
Our Rome Corespondent

In Beirut and most European capitals, few have doubts that last Sunday's American bombing of six Lebanese villages, three Syrian anti-aircraft batteries and two Druze positions in the Shouf and High Metn areas represented the first result of the "historic" strategic-military pact signed by US President Ronald Reagan and Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir in Washington, last week. It is being seen as the first step of a military escalation intended to put the Syrian regime in difficulty, inducing it to accept the Lebanese-Israeli May 17 agreement and forcing it to withdraw its support for the Lebanese national resistance to the extent that it will be possible to transform Lebanon into an Israeli protectorate and a major American base.

Few Beirut- and Europe-based observers doubt that the strategy inaugurated in Lebanon this week means, in the words of the Vatican daily *L'Osservatore Romano*'s front page, December 5, "a grave blow to world peace." Non-US or Israeli commentators are concerned that with superpower confrontation already underway in the eastern Mediterranean spilling over and reaching the Middle East, we have come to a moment in which East-West tensions have reached an all-time peak, putting the world on the threshold of a nuclear holocaust.

Finally, while the European media laments that the US "lobby" of former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, present National Security Advisor Robert McFarlane and Pentagon generals has prevailed in Washington and predicts that Israel will henceforth officially assume more openly than ever before the role of US policeman in the Middle East, few also doubt that in the immediate future Syria will be the first Arab country to find itself on the frontline not only against Israel but also against the United States, which is going to gain enormously in prestige and political influence from the American aggression.

On Sunday, December 4, at 7:30 am, 24 US Navy Corsair A-7's and Intruder A-6's, accompanied by F-14's, took off from the Sixth Fleet aircraft carriers USS Kennedy and USS Independence. Unlike previous occasions when reconnaissance flights were planned, the planes did not fly over Beirut towards the mountains but turned south, reaching their targets via the Israeli-controlled zones below the Awali. According to official American sources, the number of US planes participating in the operation was 28. According to Syrian and Soviet sources in Lebanon, there were 24 US planes and eight Israeli ones, the latter joining the US squadron over South Lebanon. For 50 minutes a deluge of high-explosive bombs and air-to-surface missiles hit the villages of Kfar Selwan, Faluga, Dar al-Beidar, Sofar and Jabal al-Kneysseh in the Syrian-controlled High Metn area and the Druze outposts of Bhamdoun and Hammana in the Shouf. A Syrian Army communique said later that two Syrian soldiers were killed in the raid and eight wounded. No figures of Lebanese casualties have as yet been given.

Western military experts in Lebanon judged the American operation a military failure. The major damage seems to have been inflicted on a Syrian ammunition depot which exploded, causing vast fires. While it is impossible to assess the damage inflicted

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Four Palestinians Hospitalised After Old City Settler Rampages

by Sami Aboudi

Settler-students at Birkat Avraham Yeshiva, in the Old City of Jerusalem, injured four Palestinians in two separate attacks, December 1 and 4. The Jerusalem municipality has asked that the school be removed from the Old City.

The settlers, most of whom have criminal records and only recently became orthodox, went on a rampage, December 1, destroying the glass windows of two Palestinian-owned shops and injuring two residents. Arab residents drove the settlers back into their *yeshiva* with volleys of stones.

Four Arab youths and three settlers were arrested and charged with participating in the fight. They were all released later.

The first settler attack was the second by the same group in less than a month. It occurred shortly after 6:00 pm, a time when hardly anybody is walking in the streets. A group of about 40 settlers, many armed with iron bars and chains, ambushed a young shopowner in the Aqbat al-Khaldiyeh road and beat him up, according to local sources. The settlers also beat up a shopkeeper's father when he intervened to defend his son.

Shopowner Ne'man Rifai'i Zaitun, 22, was later taken to the nearby Hospice Hospital, suffering severe bruising on his legs, arms, chest and head. He was hardly able to move his right arm or leg, sources at the hospital said.

His father, Yahyah, a 55-year-old blacksmith, was also hospitalised. He was also severely bruised and the top of his head was covered with bandages, hiding more than 20 stitches.

Yahyah Zaitun, who has lived in the neighbourhood all his life, said that when he saw his son being beaten, he grabbed a piece of wood and rushed to save him. "I jumped out towards the settlers as if I was moving uncontrollably, in order to rescue my son," he said. The settlers stopped their attack on the young man and began battering him, he said. During this respite, Ne'man ran the few hundred metres to the Hospice Hospital.

Meanwhile the neighbourhood, roused by the sound of the fights, moved in to defend the old man, who some reported later was being battered on the ground by settlers wielding iron bars. Groups of women and children drove the settlers away from Zaitun with stones and chased them from the quarter, local people report. As they fled, the settlers smashed the front windows of a shoe workshop and a barbershop.

From his hospital bed, blacksmith Yahyah Zaitun charged that two Israeli soldiers who were on patrol nearby did not try to stop the settlers. Other witnesses told *Al Fajr* that when the residents began throwing stones at the settlers the two soldiers fired two shots in the air and moved in to defend the settlers. The soldiers beat up several residents, including Yahyah Zaitun's wife and the mother of his partner, Bader Abu Asab, they say. She said that the soldiers pounded her and the other women with their gun butts.

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Israel Reneges on Prisoner Deal

Israeli authorities conspired to keep political prisoner Ziad Abu Ain, from al-Bireh, in detention, despite inclusion of his name on the list of prisoners to be exchanged for six Israelis last week. Abu Ain, who is now being held in the Naqab desert prison of Nafha, gave an affidavit to his lawyer, November 28, about the way the authorities "tricked the International Com-

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Three Israelis Killed in Nabatiya Raid

At least three Israeli soldiers were killed and six others wounded in two attacks, December 2 and 4, against Israeli troops in South Lebanon.

The most serious attack occurred on December 2, when three Israeli soldiers were killed and four others wounded in an attack on an Israeli patrol in Nabatiya, according to reports from Lebanon. A communique issued by the Palestine News Agency (WAFA), in Nicosia, Cyprus, said that a commando unit attacked the patrol with hand grenades and automatic fire, killing the three soldiers instantly. Meanwhile, the four wounded soldiers were evacuated to hospital.

An Israeli military spokesperson admitted the attack took place, claiming that only one soldier was killed and another wounded.

Israeli reinforcements were rushed to the town and enforced a curfew. Israeli troops combed the town for the attackers and reportedly shot and killed one Lebanese civilian. Meanwhile, several people were reported arrested.

Two days later, two Israeli soldiers were wounded during an attack on a military patrol in the village of Qbayeh, south of the Zahrani River. Foreign news correspondents said that the attackers fired shots at the patrol from a speeding car.

On the same day, Israeli sources reported that an Israeli position on the Awali River came under rocket attack. There were no reports of any casualties.

Earlier in the week an explosive device was detonated as a military convoy passed at the southern entrance to Sidon. Foreign reporters said that armoured vehicles were rushed to the area and military helicopters flew overhead.

PLO Tripoli Evacuation Imminent

Four Greek ships departed for Tripoli, December 8, to evacuate PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and 4000 loyalist fighters to Tunis, in accordance with the arrangements concluded on November 25. The four ships are to fly the UN flag. Arafat told a Saudi paper that he had demanded that the evacuation be supervised by a special Arab committee.

The departure of Palestinian forces appears to be going ahead according to schedule, despite floating threats from the Israeli establishment. The BBC speculated, December 7, that the Israeli Navy might attack the ships in order to try to arrest the PLO chairman, following reports that Israeli minister without portfolio Ariel Sharon has said that Arafat should not be allowed to leave Tripoli alive.

RENEWED FIGHTING IN BEIRUT

Israel Radio reported that there were sustained exchanges of artillery fire, December 7 and 8, between Lebanese Army-Phalangist and Progressive Socialist Party gunners around Beirut. US Marines opened up on neighbourhoods surrounding the Khalde airport after their positions came under fire, December 8. East Beirut received extensive damage in the exchanges.

Israeli reports, December 8, said the US forces are contemplating moving their contingent of the multinational forces from the airport to less vulnerable positions. The radio speculated that they would move either to US warships or behind Israeli lines.

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US-Israel Pact

to the defensive anti-aircraft missile batteries hit, three out of over 100, according to reliable sources, it is clear that neither the F-14's and F-16's nor the Corsairs and Intruders equipped with electronic instruments designed to hit missiles succeeded in neutralising the batteries. SAM missiles hit three of the US bombers. One limped back to the fleet. A Corsair A-7 crashed on the stone-built home of an eight-member Christian family in the village of Zouk, on the northern periphery of Beirut, gravely wounding six of the inhabitants. The pilot was fished out of the sea, slightly wounded, by a Lebanese boat which reconsigned him to the US Navy. An Intruder A-6 crashed into a mountain peak six kilometres east of Sofar. One pilot seems to have been seriously wounded and later died, the other was taken prisoner. He will be handed back to the US authorities, Syrian Defence Minister Mustafa Tlass announced, "at the end of the war in Lebanon, after the withdrawal of the US forces."

The downing of the US bombers — the first blow to the American Airforce since the end of the Vietnam war — was not the only response to the aggression. On Sunday evening the Marines base at Khalde was heavily shelled from Druze positions in Shueifat. Eight Marines have, as a result, been transported for burial to the US and two to military hospitals in Europe for treatment of their wounds. The base, newly reconstructed after the October 23 bombing with special shelters and security arrangements, has been devastated, according to reports from Beirut.

The American bombing came one day after the Israeli Airforce hit three Syrian, Druze and Palestinian positions in Bhamdoun and Sofar in what Israeli spokespersons described as a retaliation for a attack on a military convoy passing through Nabatiya market the day before. In the attack at least one Israeli soldier was killed — three according to Lebanese sources — and four Lebanese civilians were wounded. During the Israeli air strike on Saturday, December 3 — the fourth in the past month — US F-14 squadrons also engaged in what the Pentagon later described as a reconnaissance flight. Other sources defined it as part of a constant effort which has been going on for weeks to neutralise Syrian air defenses electronically. Syria had repeatedly warned the US to cease these flights over areas controlled by these forces, a fact broadcast by the US CBS TV network. The US and Israeli planes were fired at but did not suffer hits.

According to the Phalangist Radio, December 3, only one SAM missile was fired at the US planes. The "justification" of Sunday's bombing by the Pentagon — called a deceitful expedient by some observers — was Saturday's "dense fire, including 10 SAM missiles," against the US squadron.

Observers in Beirut predict an intensification of the American-Israeli-Syrian confrontation on the basis of two arguments, one political and the other military. Clearly, they say, the effort to neutralise the air defense system can only mean that more and larger-scale air bombings are planned. On the political level, the bombings are intended to completely reverse the balance of forces determined by the September fighting which favoured the Lebanese national resistance forces and Syria in the first round of the Geneva talks. The strategy also conforms to the demands of the Phalangist 'ultras' for an American and Israeli military intervention which would cancel any project of national reconciliation and facilitate the realisation of Phalangist hegemony over all Lebanon, following a Syrian withdrawal.

In this context, however, the destiny of Lebanese President Amin Gemayel appears even more fragile than before. Received in Washington with utmost contempt following the signing of the Reagan-Shamir pact, sent home empty-handed as far as the Geneva-concorded abrogation of the May 17 accord is concerned, treated like a real puppet in being told to negotiate directly with Israel, Gemayel, in order to conserve his position, can no more feign to follow a "third way" of mediation between the national forces and Syria on one hand and the bombers and occupiers of his country on the other. He is forced to choose openly, and that he obviously cannot do. Some European commentators have noted, very appropriately, that the Lebanese president will be trying desperately to avoid the fate of Ngo Dinh Diem, the South Vietnamese dictator placed in power by the US and then assassinated by the CIA as soon as he was suspected of opening up towards the liberation front.

The American "redeemers of the Vietnam syndrome" and their allies in Jerusalem are in fact liable to find out that the logic on which their irrational strategy in Lebanon is based can be reversed. True, they seem determined to use the method of aggression on every level — as shown by the attack on Monday in West Beirut's Tariq Jedide neighbourhood. It was reminiscent, observers recall, of identical actions by the Secret Services-sponsored "Front for the Liberation of Lebanon from Foreigners" through the months preceding the Israeli invasion of June 1982. Eighteen civilians died in the December 5 blast, and over 100 were wounded.

On December 1, one of the most respected men in the Druze community, Sheikh Halim Taki al-Din, was assassinated in his West Beirut home. The Sheikh was the spiritual leader of the Druze community and a prominent proponent of coextistence between the country's disparate communities.

After news of the killing got out, the Lebanese government moved the nightly curfew in Beirut forward as the city was reported tense. The sheikh was a supporter of the Progressive Socialist Party, and its militias immediately put responsibility for the killing on the Phalangists. The killing was soon overshadowed by the events which followed it, but at the time coresponders in Lebanon said they did not expect the militias to let the assassination go unavenged.

But the use of force and violence, air strikes and state-sponsored terrorism has proved itself totally incapable, over the past 10 years, of promoting a solution to any of the problems of Lebanon or of the Middle East. On the other side of the present balance sheet other facts are marked: the irresistable level of the resistance activities in the south, despite the massive repression and the "pressure cooker" methods adopted by the occupation authorities toward the population — on Monday, December 5, two shops selling Israeli products were completely devastated in the centre of iron-controlled Sidon; on the regional level, the US-Israeli pact and Syria's immense gain from the US aggression are having the pro-American Arab regimes, first among them Egypt, rolling with panic in view of possibly uncontrollable internal developments; and in Europe, where the European Economic Community met this week in Athens at summit level only to state its final agony, above all anxiety over East-West tension is becoming the predominant *leit-motif* of daily life. In Europe there are pressures to withdraw the multinational forces contingents from Lebanon which are reaching record levels following Sunday's events. It now seems safe to say that the Italian force is on its way out, a prelude, observers predict, to a dramatic deepening of the fractures already existing beneath the surface in the NATO alliance.

Pressure is mounting to get the European units out of the MNF in Britain and Italy. There was a stormy debate in the House of Commons the day after the raid with both government and opposition MPs demanding the 100-strong British contingent be withdrawn from Lebanon. One MP said the British force gave "a cloak of respectability to a stupid and dangerous US policy."

Conservative MP Peter Templeton-Morris, chairman of the party's Foreign Affairs Committee, said in a BBC interview after the debate that the MNF has taken on an "offensive role" following the US bombing. He said he expected the UK government to make the "strongest representations over US policy in the whole of the Middle East." He added that the US has now entered an "overt military alliance on the ground and in the air" with Israel.

Secretary of State Malcolm Rifkind defended the US, saying its bombing had been "legitimate, out of self-defence." His colleague, Minister of State at the Foreign Office with Responsibility for the Middle East Richard Luce, was called home from a trip to Syria and the Gulf States, December 7, however. UK Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher announced officially the same day that British troops would stay in Beirut but that the position was "under review." The Italians, British reports said, are pressing for a greater United Nations role in the area.

The Lebanese Cabinet met, December 7, to discuss the current crisis and announced that Foreign Minister Elie Salem was to depart for Damascus and Saudi Arabia the next day in an attempt to ascertain Syrian positions on the situation.

The London-based *Sunday Times* adds: "The US-Israeli understanding throws remarkable significance on subjects discussed at a secret meeting in East Beirut on November 23. In an exquisite villa, five leading Lebanese Christians — two of whom have played key mediating roles in Lebanese politics — were addressed by a very senior Israeli intelligence officer, we have learned.

"The Israelis were going to take military action in the Shouf mountains in eight to 10 days time. He would not be specific but said that the (Yitzhak) Shamir government was concerned that Walid Jumblatt, the Druze leader, whose headquarters is in the Shouf, and his Syrian backers had gained ascendancy since Israel withdrew its troops south to the Awali River last September.

"The intelligence officer also said that the forthcoming Shamir-Reagan meeting would be critical. He then mentioned the plans for giving Syria 'a sharp blow.' The five Christians were left with the strong impression that Israel had the stomach for a confrontation with Syria."

THIS WEEK'S CENSORSHIP

Following is a breakdown of censorship cuts for issue 188, December 9, 1983:

Number of original articles submitted to censors	29
Number of articles totally censored	6
Number of articles partially censored but used	6
Number of articles mutilated beyond use	1
Number of articles passed	16

Tent erected in the seized Nebi Yusef tomb area of Nablus in preparation for a permanent settlement./AY photo

Roadblocks Delay Najah Semester

Nine study days since the beginning of the new semester, November 12, were lost at Najah University after Israeli soldiers blocked entrances and prevented students and faculty from entering campus

Workers Shot at Gaza Checkpost

Three Palestinian workers received "medium injuries" after Israeli soldiers shot them after an incident at a checkpost near the border of the Gaza Strip, December 2. The troops opened fire on a vehicle transporting workers from Gaza to work in Israel at 6:00 am. It was 20-to-30 metres past the permanent checkpost when they opened fire, the wounded workers told *Al Fajr*. The soldiers ordered the driver to stop but he didn't hear them through closed windows, they reported.

Jibril Nu'eman Demyati Habib, 23, his brother Khamis, 21, and Jamal Abd al-Hamid Tartouri received medium injuries in the chest, shoulder and neck respectively and were taken to the private Baptist Hospital in Gaza. Khamis' condition was later described as 'serious' and he was taken to Khan Yunis Hospital. Jibril was treated and then released. Jamal remained in hospital.

Military Uproot Orchards For Qalqiliya Security Belt

Israeli bulldozers working on orders from the military authorities uprooted, November 30, more than five dunums of orange groves belonging to Palestinian residents from Qalqiliya. A military spokesman said Israeli military vehicles have been attacked from these groves.

Eyewitnesses said five bulldozers ploughed up a 500-metre strip from the groves on both sides of the Qalqiliya-Tel Aviv road. The owners of the predominantly orange orchards were held at the local military compound to prevent them from disrupting the destruction, military sources said.

The uprooting, a measure frequently used in South Lebanon, was justified on security grounds.

Sources at the military government headquarters claimed that the groves had been used as cover for attacks on Israeli cars, Israeli reporters said. No specific incident was mentioned. (Translation: Al Fajr, December 3, 1983).

13 Jerusalem Homes Ordered Razed

Thirteen families in Ras al-Amoud, near Jerusalem district, were ordered out of their homes by a magistrates court, November 25, after an order was issued to raze the buildings. The court gave the land on which the homes are built to the Israeli construction company Tomer.

The Palestinian residents were given until December 17 to demolish their homes, for which they have valid permits and land ownership documents. If they do not wreck their own homes, the authorities will do it and charge them the fees, the magistrate ordered.

Tomer claims it bought the land from a member of the Qunbar family in 1936. Palestinian residents in years later bought plots of land and built their houses on them. In court the company did not define the exact border of the area it wants to grab.

The magistrates court issued a similar order in 1981 and ordered each owner to pay IS10,000 in demolition fees.

In 1974 the Israelis excavated and fenced a 200-dunum cemetery in the area. All 13 families built or rented their homes before 1967.

Israelis Take Revenge on Dheisheh

The Israeli 'civil administration' is putting sanctions on residents of Dheisheh camp, following recent clashes in the camp.

According to *HaAretz*, applications to renew vehicle and driving licenses are being delayed and applications from new drivers are being rejected. Visitors from Jordan and other Arab countries are not allowed to return and fear they will lose jobs in Arab countries as a result, the Israeli paper reported.

Camp residents who want to visit Jordan are denied permits to do so, it said.

HaAretz quoted "security sources" as explaining that these measures were taken as part of the punishment of camp residents because of stone-throwing. (Translation: HaAretz, December 7, 1983).

Curfews and Arrests in WB Clampdown

Central Nablus was curfewed, December 7, after a hand grenade attack on an Israeli military patrol. The bomb failed to explode. A Molotov was thrown at a patrol in Askar camp on the outskirts of the city. No further details were given, according to reports on Israel Radio.

There was a similar Molotov attack against a military patrol in Nablus, December 4. Several people were detained in army round-ups, *Al Fajr* reporters said. Curfews were imposed in Balata and Askar, near Nablus, and several people were rounded up after an army search.

An Israeli bus was stoned and had several windows smashed, *Al Quds* reported, as it travelled through Ramallah. Settlers on the bus chased the stone-throwers but did not catch them.

Moshe Arens, Israel's defence minister, said the military presence in the occupied territories is being reinforced and that people resisting occupation will be given increased sentences, Israel Radio reported, December 2. He made his announcements after meeting a delegation of West Bank settlers.

Mosque-grabbing Settlers Still in Nablus

Settlers from Bracha settlement, near Nablus, are still in residence at a mosque over the tomb of Nebi Yusef in the city. A series of incidents against local residents was reported.

Jewish settlers took over the mosque completely following the stabbing of settler Yosef Stern in the Nablus wholesale vegetable market, November 28.

Sources in Nablus say the settlers occupied the two-room mosque owned by the Islamic *waqf* (Muslim charity). Locals say that settlers have been "numerous" ever since. Muslim worshippers have been unable to pray at the mosque for quite a while. An Israeli flag and state emblems have been hoisted over the mosque.

Residents of the area say they have now stopped using the main Askar road after a series of clashes. Visitors and tourists are no longer able to visit the mosque, locals say.

On December 2, Israeli settlers beat up Fayad Fathi Fayad, 22, a relative of the mosque's guard. The same day the settlers forced their way into nearby Mazuz al-Masri school and threatened students and staff.

Abd al-Fatah Duikat, a lawyer who lives near the mosque, told *Al Fajr* that the settlers have controlled the building since last week. "There are 20 vehicles parked constantly in front of the mosque," he said.

The settlers began visiting the mosque six months ago after they occupied one room in the building. After grabbing the whole building, last week, the Israeli media reported that they had agreed to vacate it after talks with Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens.

Zvi Slonim, a settler from Bracha settlement, which overlooks Nablus, was quoted in the Israeli media as saying that they would never leave their 'command post'.

Tahsin Shakhshir, a member of the disolved Nablus municipality, told *Al Fajr*, "It is part of the Israeli authorities' responsibilities to end settler provocations."

He said, "Settler provocations do no service to future coexistance between Arabs and Jews, as they claim."

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Israel Reneges

mittee of the Red Cross" and returned him to jail.

Abu Ain, who is serving a life sentence, said he was taken back to prison from the bus carrying released prisoners to the airport after his name was checked off release lists by the ICRC. The 25-year-old prisoner was transferred from Nafha prison, along with 12 other prisoners, to the Lydda airport on Wednesday night. He was taken to a Red Cross tent outside the airport, where he signed release papers. After he was out of sight of Red Cross officials, he was returned to Nafha, Abu Ain said.

He told lawyer Felicia Langer during a two-hour interview that he was beaten up and kept without food on his return.

Mahmoud Abu Ain, Ziad's older brother, told *Al Fajr* that lawyers have protested to the ICRC, requesting meetings with the legal advisor to the International Committee which supervised the exchange. The family is also planning to send protest telegrammes to the French government and the Israeli president and prime minister, he said.

The ICRC declined to give any comment on the case, citing its policy of not speaking to the press.

An Israeli Army military spokesperson, quoted by *The Jerusalem Post*, December 7, said the name of Ziad Abu Ain did not appear on the list agreed on by the Israeli Army and the ICRC. *The Post* quoted "various (unnamed) sources" as saying Abu Ain's name had indeed been included in the original PLO list but that it had been misspelt in transcription. "The resulting confusion was exploited by the Israeli security authorities, who removed him from the bus and returned him to Nafha, the sources said," according to *The Post*.

Al Ittihad reported, December 8, that Zuhdi Tarazi, the PLO representative at the United Nations in New York, had telephoned lawyer Felicia Langer to confirm that Ziad Abu Ain's name appeared on the PLO list.

REQUEST CROSSED OUT OF KNESSET AGENDA

Knesset Refuses to Discuss Prisoner Exchange Fraud

The Israeli Knesset turned down a request, December 5, to schedule a debate on the Israeli government's failure to fulfill its part of the prisoner exchange agreement with the PLO. The Democratic Front for Peace and Equality (DFPE) says 12 prisoners were not released. The petition, presented by Communist MK Meir Vilner of the DFPE, was also withdrawn from the official Knesset records.

In a speech during Knesset discussions of the visit of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to Washington, last week, Vilner raised the prisoners issue for the third time in a week.

During the morning session the same day, Vilner made an urgent request that the issue be put on the agenda. His request was turned down without explanation. A spokesperson for the DFPE Knesset office said that according to Knesset rules, the speaker is empowered to rule out any proposal without giving any justification.

Last Wednesday, November 30, following the news that political prisoner Ziad Abu Ain, of al-Bireh, was returned to prison despite his inclusion on the exchange list, Vilner questioned the Israeli government about the issue. He presented three questions to the government through the Knesset speaker: whether the failure to release the prisoners was in violation of the conditions of the accord, who was responsible for taking the decision, and whether the Israeli defence minister was ready to release the 12 prisoners at once or not. According to officials in the DFPE Knesset office, the Israeli government has two months to answer the questions.

A spokesperson for the DFPE charged that the entire discussions were withheld from the Israeli press. Only two small pieces about Vilner's speech were published in *Yediot Aharanot* and *Al Hamishmar*.

The Jerusalem Post, in its first report about the failure to release Ziad Abu Ain, December 7, said the issue "appears to be an acute embarassment" to the Israeli government.

A vote of no confidence in the government proposed by the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality was defeated by a show of hands, December 7, according to an Israeli Government Press Office statement. Earlier Meir Vilner had expressed concern that the Israelis were going to go to war with the Syrians with US backing, following the recent visit of Shamir to Washington and the escalation of military attacks since then.

After Prisoner Swap, Family Wants Reunion

Nazareth lawyer Walid Fahoum petitioned the International Committee of the Red Cross, December 6, to "interfere to end a human tragedy" by reuniting a family divided by the PLO-Israel prisoner exchange.

Fahoum asked the Red Cross to contact Nazareth resident Zakia Shamout, released from serving a life sentence, last month, to learn from her what should be done with her five children who live in the Nazareth area. He asked that she be allowed to return or her children be released to travel to her. Their father, Mahmoud Shamout, was also serving life and travelled to Algiers.

The Shamouts have five children: Masoud, 16, who lives with his grandmother in Soulam, near Nazareth; Dawlat, 16; Amer, 15; Hala, 13; and Nadia, 11. They live on welfare and charity. Nadia was born in Neve Tertza jail after her parents were sentenced in 1972.

Fahoum said in his petition: "There is no need to describe the social and psychological situation of these children after the release of their parents. Also, there is no need to mention their suffering from depression and deprivation of parental sentiment and warmth."

Galilee Priest Freed After Month Interrogation

The magistrates court in Acre released Fawzi Khoury, 36, a Greek Catholic priest from Fasouta, the Galilee, on IS100,000 bail, December 2, after a month in detention on suspicion of contact with PLO officials abroad. The court also ordered that Khoury not leave the country for the next four months.

The court heard the Israeli authorities' case that Khoury had contacted "enemy representatives" and that they had information he had endangered the "security of the state." Khoury was interrogated about his political beliefs and his activities in the Committee of the Friends of the Prisoners and the Committee for the Development of Education in the Galilee.

Khoury's friends paid the court IS100,000 in bail.

Khoury is planning to appeal to higher courts to get his passport returned, his lawyers say. He wants to return to Paris to continue his studies for a PhD in theology.

Jubilant Welcome

Over 3000 people, virtually the entire population of Fasouta, were on the streets to welcome the priest home after the court session. The Catholic Scout and Sanabal Balad band played trumpets and drums to welcome the priest. After a short mass at the entrance of the church, Khoury made a short speech thanking all those who supported him personally and the Arab character of the Catholic church.

Reactions

Local and foreign religious bodies, Palestinian national organisations and international organisations protested against the arrest of the priest. Greek Catholic churchmen in France, Belgium and Holland campaigned against his arrest, according to village sources.

The French foreign ministry denounced the detention and demanded the immediate release of the priest, the sources said. Archbishop Hilarion Capucci, the deported archbishop of Jerusalem, now residing in Rome, condemned the arrest, November 30.

Salim Wakim, one of the priests' lawyers, told *Al Fajr* that the incident marked the first time a priest was detained for 30 days without real charges.

Israeli POWs Told to Keep Moms Mum

Israeli newspapers reported earlier this week that the six Israeli soldiers who were released in the prisoner exchange between Israel and the PLO had been taken to a military base in the centre of Israel and were investigated by psychiatrists about the conditions under which they were captured.

The Hebrew daily *Yediot Aharanot* said the army authorities demanded from the six that they persuade their parents not to speak to the press.

One of the soldiers' mothers has told Israel TV that her son underwent an ideological change during his time with the PLO. She was not given the opportunity to explain further. (Translation: December 6, 1983).

Four Killed in J'lem Bus Blast

Four Israelis were killed and 46 others wounded, December 6, when a bus blew up in West Jerusalem. Israeli police sources described it as the worst explosion in Israel since 1978. The Palestine Liberation Organisation claimed responsibility for the attack.

In the aftermath of the explosion, Israeli soldiers and policemen rounded up more than 56 Palestinian residents who happened to be in the vicinity of the explosion. Meanwhile reinforcements were reported at roadblocks on the roads from Jerusalem to Ramallah and Bethlehem.

The explosion occured in a packed Number 18 Egged bus, shortly before 1:00 pm, as it waited at a red light on Herzl Boulevard a few hundred metres from Sha'ar Zedek Hospital. Israeli police experts quoted by Israeli newspapers said that "a very big" explosive device was placed under a seat opposite the back door. The bomb, possibly five kilogrammes of explosives, could have been packed with nails, the sources said.

Yediot Aharanot Hebrew daily speculated that the explosives might have been smuggled into the country from Lebanon. Israeli descriptions of the blast said the explosion blew the top of the bus 100 metres, ripped off the bus' sides and blew glass in all directions. A second bus which drew up behind the No 18 was slightly damaged. Its front caved in and the driver and five passengers were wounded.

"There was a tremendous fireball but afterwards no fire," one eyewitness told *The Jerusalem Post*. Immediately after the explosion, many wounded were transferred in private cars to Sha'ar Zedek Hospital. Minutes later large police and border guard forces, along with ambulances, arrived and assisted in transferring the rest of the wounded.

According to hospital sources, eight of the wounded remain in serious condition and 19 more were reported to be suffering from medium injuries and burns. Nineteen were released the same day after receiving treatment.

Israeli soldiers and policemen rounded up Palestinians all along the bus route. A total of 56 people were arrested for questioning, according to the police. Israeli Radio said later that four people remained in custody.

On the West Bank, Israeli military authorities intensified restrictions on the roads linking Jerusalem with the north and south West Bank. Checkposts on both directions of the Ramallah-Jerusalem road caused long delays as soldiers checked passengers' ID cards and sometimes searched and questioned them. Even stricter procedures were said to be in force on the Jerusalem-Bethlehem road.

The Palestinian News Agency (WAFA), in a dispach from Cyprus, where it is temporarily based, said that a guerrilla unit operating in the occupied territories carried out the operation. Earlier, Israel Television said that a group calling itself the General Command of the Palestinian Revolutionary Forces claimed responsibility for the attack.

The last explosion on a bus occurred in June 1978, when six Israelis were killed and 19 wounded. Last year 12 Israelis were wounded when an Egged bus was attacked with hand grenades in Tel Aviv. (Translations: Jerusalem Post, Al Fajr, Al Quds, December 7, 1983).

The following statement was published in Al Fajr *Arabic Daily on December 8, 1983:*

With regard to yesterday's bomb attack in Jerusalem, it is in our belief imperative to point out that attacks against civilian targets are detrimental to any Palestinian-Israeli understanding.

Such acts, be they in Jerusalem, Ain al-Hilweh or Nablus, are to be regretted. Violence against civilians carried out by either side is counter-productive to a just solution of the Palestinian-Israeli problem.

We are convinced that such an attack could not have been carried out by the PLO since it contradicts the current political trend of its leadership.

Karim Khalaf (*Dismissed Mayor of Ramallah*)
Anwar Nusseibeh (*Director of Jerusalem Electricity Company*)
Paul Ajlouny (*Publisher of* Al Fajr)
Mustafa Natshe (*Dismissed Mayor of Hebron*)
Hanna Siniora (Al Fajr *Editor-in-Chief*)

THE DAWN

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Peacekeepers or Warmongers?

The skies of Lebanon were crowded, this week, with Israeli and US planes fighting for the honour of destroying what they claim are Soviet-backed Syrian forces. The aims of the stepped-up American aggression were manyfold.

Publicly, Ronald Reagan and White House officials insisted that the December 4 attacks on Syrian positions in Lebanon were in retaliation for earlier attacks on American reconnaissance aircraft. But US officials couldn't deny a claim of a CBS television report that the United States had been warned two weeks ago that US reconnaissance flights would be fired on if they continued to fly over Syrian-controlled territories.

Another reason for the air strikes was provided by *The Washington Post*, which quoted US administration officials as saying that the US hopes the attack will pressure Syria to withdraw its forces from Lebanon in conjunction with an Israeli withdrawal. So here it is. Trigger-happy Reagan wants to accomplish by sheer force what Israel was unable to do through its invasion of Lebanon or through the May 17 agreement with Lebanon.

Yet there appears to be another reason for the air strike in which two American fighters were downed and a third hit.

After the invasion of the south Caribbean island of Grenada, Pentagon experts and White House officials feel confident in the new era they are ceating. An era in which, they think, American supremacy can be achieved by backing their imperialist policies with armed might.

It is clear that Washington's latest actions in Lebanon were the result of this brankrupt policy. US hopes for a strong Amin Gemayel Lebanese government were upset by the results of the Geneva reconciliation conference. And with their lead horse, Gemayel, unable to stop the Syrian-Lebanese relationship, the Americans stepped in to take things into their own hands.

The American aggression on Arab forces leaves all Arabs united in one demand – immediate withdrawal of the multinational forces from Lebanon, which have ceased being peacekeepers and are now warmongers.

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American Generosity Reagan-style

by Ghassan Bishara
Our Washington DC Corespondent

After hearing a background briefing at the White House following the conclusion of the second meeting between US President Ronald Reagan and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, November 30, both American and foreign journalists expressed disbelief about what they heard. A reporter for a major news agency said, "I can't believe this. I have never seen anything like it before. Reagan gave the United States away, receiving nothing in return from the Israeli prime minister."

On the south lawn of the White House before Shamir's departure, Reagan described their talks as what "could be expected between close friends and allies (and as) very productive." Reagan said that the two agreed to increase American-Israeli cooperation, "particularly in the political and military area." Reagan said it will be enhanced through a joint political-military group which will hold its first meeting in early January. At the top of the agenda will be the threat to US and Israeli interests posed by the "increased Soviet involvement in the Middle East." The group will examine "combined planning, joint exercises and requirements for the pre-positioning of US equipment in Israel," according to officials.

The two heads of state, Reagan said, agreed to take other "concrete steps aimed at bolstering Israel's economy and security." These include: improving terms of US assistance to Israel; use of American funds and military assistance to develop the Lavi fighter; use by Israel of American foreign military sales credits (FMS) to produce American weapons systems; and "offering to negotiate a free trade area with Israel."

All these items were included in the 1981 memorandum of understanding (MOU). The MOU was shelved by the US following Israel's bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor and the annexation of the Syrian Golan Heights. Arab states friendly to the US opposed the MOU. A White House briefer hinted, this week, however, that these Arab states may have been informed of the Reagan-Shamir agreement and did not oppose it.

'All give and no take'

The senior official said the Arabs feel less anxious about the occupied territories and settlements but not about American-Israeli relations. He said he senses less anxiety from the Arabs about the latest agreement "because we have been telegraphing (that this agreement with Israel) was on the way for weeks now." He said moderate Arab states don't see the US' "explicit and open relationship with Israel" as a threat to them.

About US economic aid to Israel, the official said Reagan is conscious of Israel's economic difficulty and will take that into consideration when he submits the 1985 budget to Congress. Israel has requested that all US assistance for the year 1985 be in grant form.

Congress will almost certainly give Israel the money.

Israel's Three 'No's'

Journalists were shocked by the briefing

continued on page 11

Gemayel Goes Home Empty-handed

by Ghassan Bishara

Lebanese President Amin Gemayel will be returning to Lebanon, if he can get in through the closed Beirut airport, without having achieved any of his objectives.

At a second White House briefing after Reagan met Gemayel, December 2, an official reaffirmed the previous conclusions. He said there were no substantial changes in the US position regarding the May 17 agreement.

The US pledged its support for Lebanese national reconciliation, for strengthening the central Lebanese government and for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon in accordance with the May 17 agreement. The US will help Gemayel to find ways of implementing the agreement, suggesting that one way is through contact with Israel. The US blamed Syria for the non-implementation of the US-mediated pact and for almost all of Lebanon's troubles, the officials said.

He also suggested that Lebanon can play a role in a broader peace in the Middle East, adding that therefore it must retain its "Arab credentials." He said there are such plans at present for expansion of the multinational forces.

The official said Saudi King Fahd had delivered a letter to Reagan offering Arab guarantees of a Syrian withdrawal from Lebanon if the US gets Israel out first. Asked about what may happen when Gemayel returns to Lebanon empty-handed, an official said the US can't reconstitute Lebanon for the Lebanese, "they have to do it themselves and the US is willing to help."

According to the London *Sunday Times* and *Observer* newspapers, there is a secret US-Israeli agreement to force Syria out of Lebanon.

A leader in *The Washington Post* argues that Arab objections and possible retaliation against the US "is a tired, overstated alarm." She quotes Shamir as saying that neither the US nor Israel will change their minds about the Reagan Plan, which Israel rejected, and thus the plan may die on its own like other Middle East plans, adding that the US is "not posing Palestinian conditions on aid."

In another article about a likely Arab reaction to the Israeli-US agreement, officials told *The Washington Post* they "expected a few weeks of harsh rhetoric from friendly Arab countries but that this rhetoric would be discontinued and would be followed by a realisation in these countries that they have to return to cooperation with the United Sates." American officials don't take any Arab threats seriously since, they argue, they have the history of their policy in the Middle East for the last 35 years to support them.

Besides comments by King Hussein criticising the US-Israeli agreements, there have been no threats by governments of the Arab world.

OPINION

AL FAJR invites our readers to contribute letters, articles and opinions. Contributions must be signed, but names may be withheld upon request.

A Resounding 'No' to Resettlement

by Hamdi Farraj

Palestinian refugee camps in the West Bank were visited recently by a large number of foreign and Israeli reporters who wanted refugees' opinions on the (Israeli minister without portfolio Mordechai) Ben Porat resettlement plan.

At Dheisheh camp, I accompanied all kinds of reporters — local, foreign, friendly, hostile — to listen to a variety of refugees. Rejection of the resettlement plan was their enormous reaction. I was impressed by the responses much as the reporters were disappointed by them because these reporters imagine themselves living in a democratic, free and humanitarian society, particularly after Israeli minister without portfolio Mordechai Ben Porat described his project as a purely humanitarian one, having nothing to do with politics.

Among the responses the reporters heard were:

— "There can be no occupation and humanitarian aid at the same time; both contradict each other;"

— "This is the first time a minister's position or projects are not political;"

— "If they are really humanitarians, as they say, let them remove the barricades with which they closed the camp's road, making our people look like animals in a zoo;"

— "A man has only one home. Let them, therefore, allow us to return to our homes;"

Dheisheh barrier: "There can be no occupation and humanitarian aid at the same time, both contradict each other."

— "We do not need beautiful homes and neighbourhoods; we need the freedom they usurped from us;"

— "We know what the Israeli minister intends by his plan. He wants to end the refugee problem and our long-suffering with a beautiful house."

These are some of the responses of the refugees at Dheisheh camp. Ben Porat himself visited the camp eight months ago and got similar reactions. Reacting to the press conference held by refugee representatives and the Committee in Solidarity with Bir Zeit University in which the refugees denounced the resettlement plan, Ben Porat said the participants in the conference were nothing but vindictive individuals whose opinions do not reflect the real wishes of the refugees.

But after reporters visited the camp, we hope the minister and other officials will try to be honest with themselves and realise that resolving the refugee problem cannot be treated independently of a comprehensive and just solution to the Palestinian question. Only then would we believe that Ben Porat's intentions are humanitarian. (Translation: Al Mithaq, November, 30, 1983).

Hamdi Farraj is a journalist and an editor of the recently banned Al Shira'. *He lives in Dheisheh camp, near Bethlehem.*

They **Can't Do What** We **Want**

by A. Yonis

During the recent international symposium of the International Centre for Peace in the Middle East, West Bank Palestinians were pressed for a "clear-cut" unilateral recognition of Israel — an Israel defined as within the 1967 borders, possibly without East Jerusalem — and an initiative aimed at getting negotiations about a "solution" afloat. It was more than hinted that they considered a renewal of PLO talks between PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat and Jordan's King Hussein a possible solution.

Responses indicated that local Palestinians are willing to accept "anything that will end occupation."

"We're not against being with Jordan or King Hussein, but only through a decision by the PLO, and that's because of the Palestinians in the diaspora," said Karim Khalaf, elected-and-deposed mayor of Ramallah.

Khalaf predicted the Arafat-Hussein talks would start again soon. But he stressed that nobody in the occupied territories is able to go and talk with Arafat about this or any other question. "You can go and talk to Arafat," he told the peace-seekers, and explained his position:

"We were elected. We were told: 'This is a democracy. You can speak.' So we spoke openly. And we were punished." He summed up his experience with the occupation:

"I was bombed. So far, to this day, no Israeli soldier or police officer has come to me and asked: 'What happened to you?' "

Still, Karim Khalaf declared: "We're ready to recognise Israel as a state within the 1967 borders." However, he doubted the readiness of Israel to recognise the rights of Palestine. He asked if Israel is ready to give the West Bank and Gaza (and East Jerusalem) to Arafat or to King Hussein, and even stated: "I would like to wake up one morning and see Hussein taking the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Nobody will be against that."

Ace of Trumps

Such declarations were received by participants in the symposium as "positive " but not sufficient. A representative of the ICPME summed up the situation in these words: "*They* can't do what *we* want." It dawned on some of the participants that the local population of the occupied territories is not free to organise a football club, far less political bodies. This understanding deepened their despair, since a unilateral recognition was defined a 'trump card' not to be played too late, rather than as a last card (leaving an empty hand). However, there was no effort from the other side of the table to recognise the unity of the Palestinians (within the territories, the 'green line' and in the diaspora) as the one and real ace of trumps. It was clearly not this part of Karim Khalaf's message that interested them.

Karim Khalaf: "We're ready to recognise Israel. Is Israel ready to recognise us?"

Another elected-but-dismissed spokesperson for the West Bank Palestinians is Mayor of Nablus Bassam Shaka'a. He was not among those visited by the symposium. I believe that he should also be heard on the issue and have asked him what his concept is of what message the West Bank and Gaza Palestinians would send to Yasir Arafat in a post-Tripoli situation (if they were free to do so).

"Our message to Yasir Arafat is: 'Use the leadership!' Call a meeting and table a plan for unity. Heal the wounds within the PLO and then heal the wounds in the relationship to Syria and the Arab nation," says Bassam Shaka'a.

"Annexation Madness"

One of the American members of the ICPME himself a Jew, left, leaving behind him a public statement to Israel Radio that the annexation policy is "sheer madness." During the symposium, Hebronites were told that what really frustrated the participants "was the kind of things we had to hear the other night when we met with (Labour Party Leader) Shimon Peres." The Centre is very much an Israeli, Labour Party-based organisation.

What nobody said during the symposium was that any solution is simply not in the cards (for the foreseeable future), yet this is the most likely conclusion from press reports of the symposium. If the participants agreed that the annexation policy is "madness," they did not tell the public that they consider what they saw of the occupied territories as 'crazy reality.' They were told, however, by a Knesset representative of the ruling party in Israel, Ehud Olmert, Likud chairman of the Knesset Foreign Relations Commitee, that there's nothing to gain from any initiative from the Palestinian side: "For the indefinite future there's nothing to talk about since there will be no retreat from an ultimate solution," he stated, adding that "time is running out for a reasonable compromise," in his opinion.

"I don't care about the Palestine National Council. I don't think Yasir Arafat is representative," Olmert said and preferred to talk about "autonomy for the Palestinian population of the cities, without independence, without a state, not for the territories," an option that was described as "Jordanian *Bantustans* in *Eretz Israel*."

A. Yonis is a pseudonym for a foreign corespondent visiting the area .

Ansar camp in South Lebanon was depopulated last week, thus ending another chapter in Israel's holding of prisoners extra-legally. Unfortunately, for reasons beyond our control, *Al Fajr* was unable to tell the story of the camp. In *HaAretz*, Michael Garti reviewed the story of Ansar from an Israeli angle.

Ansar: Chronology of Israel's Mass Detention Failure in Lebanon

Damour detainees in the first weeks of the 1982 invasion: creating the need for a massive prison camp./EB photo

Two months after the renovation of Ansar camp was completed (at a cost of 10s of millions of shekels), the gates of the camp were opened and one night the tents were emptied of the 4700 prisoners who had been held for 16 months. The 1100 prisoners who chose to leave Lebanon were flown at night to Lydda airport and from there they left in three Jumbo jets to Algiers. The rest — 3600 prisoners — were taken in buses to release points in Tyre, Sidon, Nabatiya and Hasbayya.

It is difficult to measure pleasures but it can be said clearly that there were people whose pleasure was no less than that of the families of the six Israeli prisoners or those who were released from Ansar and their families. They were the regular and reserve army soldiers who served for long periods in the camp and whose opinion was, in the words of the area commander, that: "Ansar is a disgusting place, disgusting to visit and more disgusting to be in."

At the beginning, Sofa — a citrus-packing factory in Sidon — was turned into a temporary prison camp for hundreds and later thousands of prisoners who were captured at the beginning of the war in Lebanon. After that, prisoners were taken to detention camps in Israel. The camps were small and horribly overcrowded — 60 prisoners to a tent planned for 12. This put Israeli soldiers and military police to difficult tests. "It was impossible to provide prisoners with minimal basic needs, and the solution was to hold them with what was available, thus creating an atmosphere of tension and fear." Shots were fired in the air daily at Megiddo (near Haifa).

Then, two weeks after the beginning of the war, the decision was taken to set up a central prison camp in South Lebanon. On the road between Dawawir and Ansar, a camp of tents was rapidly put up and surrounded by barbed wire fences and earthworks. One of the decisive considerations in choosing South Lebanon as the site of the camp was legal — this also created the definition of the prisoners as detained (literally — "brought-ins," the term is also meaningless in Hebrew — eds).

Seven thousand nine hundred people were concentrated in 30 encampments separated by barbed wire fences — everyday new prisoners were brought in and others were released after it was revealed they had no connection with Palestinian organisations (some of those who were released were imprisoned later).

In the beginning life in the camp was directed by Israeli soldiers, but this caused (sic) many incidents of violence towards prisoners. After this an investigation committee was even formed whose recommendations were passed to the military prosecution.

When the exceptional incidents were discovered, it was decided to change the camp administration. From 1982 an attempt was made to administer it as a prison camp should be according to Geneva Conventions — this without Israel's official recognition of the status of the prisoners (as POWs or 'protected civilians' — eds). A permanent delegation representing the (International Committee of the) Red Cross was stationed in the camp, and the administration of daily life was passed to the prisoners. At the beginning there were *mukhtars* who were appointed arbitrarily in every encampment. They were replaced by people who achieved the position by virtue of their leadership. The most important stage in the development of the independent administration of the camp was the establishment of the "committee" of the prisoners, headed by Salah Ta'amari, which conducted daily contacts with the Israeli camp commanders.

But the ideal of independent administration apparently did not last long. The thousands of prisoners moving about inside the barbed wire fences opposite the guard towers were growing impatient. Prisoner exchange negotiations were almost frozen, and with each passing day the prisoners exhibited more extreme conduct. Most of the military policemen and soldiers who served in the camp were reservists and they preferred to make small concessions in order to have peace and quiet until they were released from service. The prisoners made as much use as possible of this situation — they were helped by the feelings of the Israeli forces about the fate of the Israeli prisoners in the hands of the PLO.

The deterioration of control inside the barbed fences was rapid — a situation which was described by the commander of the northern distict, Amir Drori, thus: "The situation was close to catastrophe. There was a situation where the next stage would be mass escape."

Senior officials who visited the camp were shocked by the situation — the fences of the encampments had been felled by the prisoners. The prisoners cheered when they were threatened with guns, they harassed the soldiers and threw stones and sacks full of dirt at them. There was trouble in the morning when the soldiers counted the prisoners. Whenever the prisoners had demands, they refused to to be counted and prevented soldiers entering the encampments. Movement between the encampments went on day-and-night over the collapsed fences. The prisoners also walked the central streets of the camp, ignoring the guards.

At the height of the deterioration, escape actions began — it is not known how many prisoners got away. "They don't even know how many prisoners there were," one soldier in Ansar said. Others expressed fear that guards would be taken hostage. The Israeli soldiers' low morale was also reflected in the low percentage of those showing up for reserve service. They said that they were not ready to take responsibility for, and ignored, what was being done in Ansar.

Towards the end of August, after escapes and other incidents — at the height of which prisoners set fire to the tents — the Ansar commander was changed and the rehabilitation of the camp started.

Tens of millions of shekels were invested in the building of the new Ansar. It was paved with asphalt and concrete to prevent the digging of tunnels. (During the work an underground network of tunnels was discovered. They had been dug by the prisoners). Even during the process of transferring prisoners from the temporary camp to which they were evacuated during the work, many other tunnels were discovered, and a bulldozer which drove over one tunnel fell into it and six prisoners were crushed to death.

"We are not psychologically built to be camp guards," an officer said not long ago. "And I am proud of this, despite the problems which arose." Now, with the dismantling of Ansar and the return of the six Israeli prisoners from Tripoli to Israel, there are prisoners still in the hands of Israel — the "bargaining cards" which the defense minister mentioned when saying there is hope for the release of other prisoners. But there must also be hope that the basic mistake of concentrating thousands of prisoners in one place will not be repeated.

With the release of the Ansar prisoners we should expect a rise in South Lebanon security problems. The 3600 prisoners who chose to stay in Lebanon are members of Palestinian organisations. The long stay in Ansar in difficult conditions reinforced their social ties and awareness. In the "schooling" organised by prisoners were parts of the Palestinian organisations' training courses. "We expect problems and we will handle them," Moshe Arens said, November 24, in answer to a question on this subject. Similar answers came from other senior military officials. But all those who were asked said there was relief in the Israeli Army to "get rid" of this evil whose name is Ansar. Or as one of my colleagues put it: "What is left is to know whether the dismantling of Ansar was done as a part of the payment of Israel to the PLO or as a part of the price which the PLO gave to Israel."

Ansar largely turned into a symbol of the Israeli trap in Lebanon. The thousands of prisoners were stuck in the throat of Israel and it was unable either to swallow them or cough them up. Their release, although it was done under pressure of fears for the lives of the six prisoners in Tripoli, shows that by making difficult decisions it is possible to get rid of the trap. (Translation: HaAretz, November 25, 1983).

Released Ansar prisoners at Lydda airport. Between the establishment and the dismantling of Ansar, the "prisoners were stuck in the throat of Israel and it was unable either to swallow them or cough them up."

WEST BANK EDUCATION FACES SERIOUS OBSTACLES

In the West Bank a teacher's lot is not a happy one. **Maher Abukhater** of *Al Fajr* met some very frustrated working and retired pedagogues for this review of the current state of education.

December 14 is Palestinian Teachers' Day, traditionally celebrated in the West Bank with cultural activities reflecting their work. It's also a day on which students and the community at large express their appreciation of the doubly difficult task West Bank educators face.

The way the military puts it is that if students are absent from class for 20 days, then this is grounds for their dismissal from school. One such recorded case happened to a student from Fawar refugee camp, near Hebron. The student, Khalid Hasnah, was dismissed from his school, Al-Hussein Ben Ali, for being absent for a long time. The Secondary Schools Student Committee said Hasnah was absent because of continuous harassment by the military offices in Hebron.

Some of the teachers were given early retirement. According to Jordanian law, a teacher have to serve 30 years before he or she is eligible for retirement. Yet in several cases, Israel has halved the period.

Transfers mean daily journeys to far-flung schools to which transportation is very difficult. Another, Jamal Banoura, a teacher from Beit Sahour, was transferred three times before he finally retired after teaching for 26 years. His last post was to a village near Ramallah.

These teachers are luckier than those dismissed outright. According to the committee member, the new practise is that new teachers are employed for a two or three months' "training period" before they are allowed to become regular teachers. This is part of Jordanian law.

So far West Bank teachers have no union to represent their interests. Unions in public institutions are forbidden under Jordanian law and, naturally, Israel did not see a need to change this regulation. Teachers do have a committee and hope it will do the job and be recognised by both Jordan and Israel, the committee member said. The committee has the support of 60 percent of the West Bank public school teachers, but so far requests for recognition have been denied.

Three years ago, on December 14, 1980, West Bank teachers led by the committee declared a strike for improved conditions. It lasted 60 days. As it pitted them against their military government employers it had immediate political implications. Ultimately they managed to get some small improvement in their pay.

But according to a straw poll of local teachers conducted during the researching of this article, low salary still comes at the top of the list of complaints. A teacher who graduated from one of the West Bank's two-year teacher training courses said an educator receives JD70-80 for teaching in elementary school and about JD100 for secondary. A teacher with a BA degree gets a few extra dinars, he added.

The salary is determined by a scale developed when the West Bank was under Jordanian rule and is still used on both banks of the Jordan River. It has nine levels. An instructor with a two-year teaching diploma joins the scale at level 9. A teacher with a BA starts at level 7. Then comes the slow process of climbing this ladder to reach the top levels. Many teachers retire before even getting close.

"The salary is not even enough to pay rent these days," said one school principal who has strict orders from the authorities not to give information about the school to any outsider. The *waqf* schools' general manager refused an interview despite standing orders to his staff that they relay all requests for information to him. It was refused on the grounds that the "management does not want any trouble with the Israeli authorities."

Not only public school teachers complain about salaries. Private schools, which charge their students as much as JD150 per annum in tuition, make a similar complaint. The money private schools make from tuition, Attyieh Masarweh, principal of St. George's School in East Jerusalem, said, is barely enough to pay teachers' salaries let alone improve conditions. Private schools have no other source of income than their students, unlike the state-supported public schools or semi-private ones which lean more towards the public school system, like the *waqf* (Muslim endowment), Masarweh said. There was an attempt, however, several years ago by some private schools to establish some kind of fund from the schools' alumni to help cover expenses. This attempt was soon aborted becase of disagreement over where the money collected would be spent, according to Masarweh.

All interviewed teachers admitted their salaries barely get them and their families through the month. With the current high cost of living under the Israeli occupation, many find it necessary to work a second job. However, new Israeli rules, issued this academic year, ban West Bank teachers from taking a second job without prior permission from the military government. Because of such orders, which also prohibit teachers from getting involved in any political activity, including talking to the press without special permission, teachers face an uphill struggle in improving their livelihood.

This, the retired educator said, seriously impedes the performance of teachers and has a negative impact on teaching. The teachers are constantly frustrated and depressed because they have to work hard, almost 26 hours teaching a week, and are then not paid enough to give their families a decent living. They lose interest and teaching becames for them 'just another job,' he noted.

The low salaries undoubtedly are a cause of the gradual decline in the quality of education in the West Bank which is now noticeable, according to Dr Gabi Baramki, vice-president of Bir Zeit University, but it is not the only one. The rigid Jordanian curriculum has not changed for many years. Experts say it has failed to keep up with the challenges of today's society and fast-developing technologies. They also point to the "routine of teaching" which causes many teachers to suffer 'teacher burn-out' after years of teaching the exact same material.

Strict orders come from Jordan's Department of Education that nothing except the required text books should be taught in schools following the Jordanian curriculum. The Israeli government can, of course, overrule this order. For example, the Jordanian *tawjihi* (matriculation) curriculum requires a full course on the Palestinian question. This, obviously, does not please Israel, which decided, after it occupied the West Bank, to completely cancel it. Jordan, having no other choice, decided to comply with this new situation and make an exception in this one case.

This was not the end of Israeli interference in the Jordanian curriculum. The name 'Palestine' is anathema to Israel. It, therefore, summarily struck it out of all text books. This creates a situation in which books on the history of the Arab world talk about many Arab events and all the Arab countries except the one the students live in. Not a single mention of Palestinian history or even connections between regional developments that touch on events in Palestine, are included. This also has to be overlooked by the Jordanians.

The Jordanian curriculum requires nothing more than straight science or art courses. The science stream includes biology, physics, chemistry and mathematics. Arts are Arabic, English, religion, geography and history. Instructors criticise the system as "dry," with nothing more than plain information. The retired educator accused it of "lacking educational and directional qualities." He said the students finish school knowing nothing more than the pure science or art they took in school. There are no extra-curricular activities that can help the student learn more than the minimum required for the *tawjihi*, he explained.

For example, music is not taught in schools because there are few qualified music teachers. This is in addition the high cost of musical instruments. The buildings are also simply functional, with only classrooms to accomodate all students. Some are so cramped than have no room for a playground. For example *waqf* schools in Jerusalem are converted old houses which don't even look like schools. Some of the *waqf* buildings were relinquished to the Israelis after 1967. After Jerusalem was annexed in 1967 the Israeli curriculum was forced on the city's public schools. The *waqf* refused to comply and decided to open their own semi-private schools. There was a flood of students from the public schools to these private ones so that they would be able to continue studying the Jordanian curriculum, a prerequiste for anyone wanting to get into an Arab university or become an employee in a Gulf concern.

The imposition of the Israeli curriculum and the massive desertion of students has left its scars on Jerusalem public schools even though four years ago Jerusalem's Israeli Mayor Teddy Kollek, realising the futility of "Israelising" schools, changed his policy and decided to give preparatory and secondary schools the choice of either the Israeli or Jordanian curriculum. The elementary schools still use the Israeli curriculum.

"Jerusalem students are not as good in the *tawjihi* exams as West Bank students," said the retired teacher, who used to grade *tawjihi* papers. "This is because the elementary and preparatory teaching is very weak, mainly because of the absence of qualified teachers. When West Bank students come to Jerusalem's secondary schools and sit for the *tawjihi*, they usually perform better than Jerusalem students. Only secondary school teachers are qualified."

Teachers' qualifications have always been a problem. Some teachers said the elementary and preparatory school teachers have nothing more than *tawjihi* certificates themselves and are, they accuse, on occasion appointed as "a favour." This has created a group of teachers who have no interest in teaching and therefore never try to be innovative or improve themselves.

This phenomenon may be more visible in public schools than private or semi-private ones. Private schools mainly employ university graduates at all levels, the principal of St. George's School said. The same thing occurs in the semi-private schools, according to a teacher there who also preferred to remain anonymous. These schools are also regularly inspected.

But the teachers alone are not to be blamed for the decline in the quality of education. The families share part of the blame. Families do not seem to care much about what their children are doing, said the school principal whose name was withheld. They never come to the schools, he charged, to ask about their children and to learn of their progress. They never force their children to attend school even though the Jordanian law makes it compulsory to go to school at least until the end of the preparatory level — another law Israel is indifferent to. Sometimes the families prefer that their children go to work at Israeli factories to make money, he explained.

The education departments in the West Bank share part of the blame for the weakness of education. They do not try to make books available for students at the beginning of the school year. Some text books arrive two or three months late. There have even been occasions when the year ends before a particular fact book is available. There is no reason given for this tardiness. The Israeli government ban on some text books is for "security" reasons.

The blame is shared by those at the top also. The Jordanian Ministry of Education has passed a law that makes it a requirement that all students in the first-to-third grades be automatically promoted to a higher grade even if they flunked all their courses. This controversial law was met with great opposition in the West Bank. Teachers here said the first three years are the most crucial ones. They determine what will become of the students. Therefore, more attention should be spent on these children to help them master whatever they are learning before they are promoted to a more difficult level.

The Jordanians, on the other hand, claimed that unless students in the first years are promoted, the lower classes will be overcrowded and new students will suffer.

But overcrowdedness in schools has been and still is a major problem. Many of the public schools, including the semi-private and the UNRWA schools, are forced to adopt a day and evening classes system to accommodate all pupils. The lack of funds to build new schools and the difficulty in getting building permits have forced schools to use the same classes for the lower levels during the early hours and for higher levels in the evening. In the lower classes there is an average of 40 students compared to 30 for upper level classes. Private schools do not have this problem.

An employee at a West Bank education department insisted that the problem does not exist in any of the West Bank public schools. He said there used to be such a problem but it is now resolved along with problems that deal with health matters in the schools.

Politics can influence everything, particulary education. When Jordan and Syria were on excellent terms in the late 1970s, an agreement was made between both countries to unify their curricula. Jordan was quick to embrace the Syrian curriculum and started enforcing it in the first grade, moving up a grade with every new year. This process reached the fourth grade before relations between Jordan and Syria soured on the way to their present critical point. Teachers here confess that the Syrian curriculum is better than the Jordanian one.

Education is an integral part of any society. For the Palestinians everywhere, education is necessary for survival. In the occupied territories, academic education is seen as their gateway to a better life and they are, therefore, eager to pursue it. Indeed they are the best educated in the Arab world.

But the absence of a viable state to care for their futures has paved the way for certain unqualified opportunists to enter the field. These individuals, assisted by foreign states which rule the Palestinians, have created obstacles intended to kill the Palestinians' most powerful weapon. These obstacles and problems have left an impact still felt today. Yet for the Palestinians who still see the great value of education, the battle is a long and bitter one and they are hopeful they will win it.

RAMALLAH TEACHERS PROTEST LOW WAGES

Ten out of 11 Ramallah area schools were closed, December 5, as teachers walked out to protest low wages. The strike was called by the Ramallah district teachers committee.

In a letter to the Israeli authorities education department, the committee announced it had decided to take practical measures after their demands had been ignored.

Two weeks ago the Ramallah schools administration applied for 100 percent rises for teachers. In reaction, the Israeli education liaison officer held several meetings with the heads of the education departments and promised them to "seriously study" their demands.

A Ramallah district teachers committee statement said they "waited in vain for results while their conditions continued to deteriorate." They said they reached the conclusion that the "authorities' promises are baseless nonsense aimed at dividing teachers to prevent them taking steps to improve their conditions."

The committee told teachers that the Israeli authorities were told of their intention to take practical measures. They called on teachers to "remain united and not to listen to rumours."

Fadel Rimawi, member of Ramallah district committee, told *Al Fajr* that conditions in West Bank schools are unbearable and the teachers cannot do their jobs properly. He said they "suffer real starvation."

The average teacher's salary is JD80, committee sources say. A newly appointed teacher showed *Al Fajr* a payslip for the month of November showing he earned less than JD60.

A woman teacher with 26 years experience at a Ramallah school who asked to remain anonymous said she is a level 4 teacher (from a nine-point scale) and earns only IS21,000 per month. She told *Al Fajr* that the lowest wage in her school is IS18,000.

Another teacher from the new al-Bireh Secondary School said he earns IS24,000, with transportation costs.

Palestinians place great importance on education and see it as the gateway to a better life. However, Jordanian and Israeli restrictions, the lack of funds and the deficiencies of teacher training have imposed severe obstacles for West Bank educators and students. These pupils from Taqwa', near Beit Sahour, learn in overcrowded classrooms and lack even the most basic of facilities — a proper playground./AO photos

What does "chase and detain stone-throwers" mean? Zvi Barel of *HaAretz* examines some of the implications of General Amnon Lipkin's instructions to settlers, last week, and sees it as a formula for further bloodshed.

TO CATCH A STONE-THROWER

Israeli settler — kalashnikov at the ready — prays at Joseph's Tomb in Nablus. "After years of being considered lawbreakers, authority has granted them immunity."

With a phrase that was perhaps accidental, the new commander of the central district, General Amnon Lipkin, has created a new and dangerous reality.

After 16 years of settlement, salvation has come: finally a central command general has arrived whom the settlers can praise. They leave a meeting with him feeling there will be order. To be precise, not that he will make order but that he has given them the long-desired permission to make order by themselves. After years when some settlers were considered law-breakers, as those taking the law into their own hands or as instruction-breakers, authority has finally come and granted them immunity.

November 22, in the packed Kiryat Arba council room, the central command general, Amnon Lipkin, said: "Whoever is stoned must chase the stone-throwers and catch them," altogether a simple and clear truth that doesn't need too much elaboration. However, in everyday reality, and especially in face of the accumulated experience on the (West) Bank, this saying bears within it the potential to create a new legal situation and a change of situation which perhaps the general himself didn't intend.

Let's imagine for a moment a situation in which an Egged bus travels from Jerusalem to Kiryat Arba or to Ofra or to Ariel. On the way, near an Arab village, a stone is thrown which breaks the front window. The passengers of the bus identify the stone-thrower, order the driver to stop and start the manhunt. The youth who threw the stone runs into his village, hides at home and waits. The pursuers who — according to standing orders — bear arms run into the village and lose track of the stone-thrower. In the centre of the village they halt and discuss their next move. One of the pursuers is certain the youth was wearing a blue shirt and brown pants. Another adds a striped jacket to the description and the third dresses his lad in a *kafiyya*. With this complete description they start a house-to-house search — and this time there is no need for a search order; it is possible to do without the attendance of the *mukhtar* because the general said "to chase and catch."

Now there is a legal coating. The *posse* moves from house to house in their search for the youth who answers to the description that some of the passengers have suggested. And here it becomes clear that after long hours of searching — not necessarily carried out with too much gentleness — they discover five suspects. What should they do? Should they take them all to the (military) government headquarters and charge them? Or will they agree that only one will be the criminal suspect and only he should be taken away?

After a short dispute they accept the argument that if they bring in five, there will be grounds that they'll not be able to identify the stone-thrower during the trial and the fact that they'll not be able to point to one single suspect will raise questions relating to the reliability of their testimonies. But how to choose the one suspect out of the five who were captured? The only way is to carry out a first-hand investigation on the spot. And how do they hold an investigation in which eventually one of the five will confess? This may be left to the imagination. The main point is that at the end of the manhunt the general's instruction was activated. The stone-thrower was chased and caught.

However, this was a relatively simple case because now let's presume that the stone-throwers come from a school, as usually is the case. What should those who were stoned do then? If they don't chase them, others will tell them: "What are you shouting about? We told you to chase and catch the stone-throwers, we gave you the authorisation, paved a new way for you and you didn't use it!" It is imperative to chase. The passengers get out of their vehicle and with cocked weapons run into the school. Here a new situation develops unlike the previous one. The pursuers find themselves surrounded by hundreds of students who try to stop them from entering classrooms to catch the guilty persons. The students throw everything they can lay their hands on at the *posse* — stones, bits of metal, chairs. They push them with their hands and try to take away their weapons. The bus passengers are suddenly transformed from pursuers into those being pursued.

The desire to follow instructions has put them in a situation in which their lives are in danger. In this case the instructions are clear: "Open fire." And that is what they do. In the report after the event it will be said that the passengers opened fire on youths threatening their lives. No one will blame the instruction that made it possible for them to get into this situation. Because this is an innocent and logical instruction, isn't it?

General Lipkin omitted one word — sole and principled — from the instructions that he gave in Kiryat Arba. He forgot — I hope — to say that the army should chase the stone-throwers and catch them. Not the settlers. Without this addition, Lipkin delegates authority to everybody to be responsible for security and opens the gate for a legal Wild West on the (West) Bank. Because according to the spirit of the instruction, settlers will be authorised to set up checkposts on the roads, to order curfews and to make arrests. Everything under the cloak of chasing disrupters.

And how to create a situation in which the army will be able to be at hand and to catch the stone-throwers? Until about a year and a half ago (Israeli Army) patrols accompanied buses, and in certain cases buses carried armed soldiers.

And so for a long period there was a decrease in the number of attacks on buses that travelled from the settlements to Israel and *vice versa*. However, following settler demands, the attached military personnel were removed and replaced by a civilian body. The reason for this is interesting in itself: they said that there was no reason for the situation on the (West) Bank to be different from that in Netanya or Beer Sheba. In those places there is no military escort on Egged buses and in spite of this nobody attacks them. And because, according to their concepts, the (West) Bank is an inseparable part not only of *Eretz Israel* but also of the State of Israel, they don't see any ideological basis for the difference in the security situation between Israel and the (West) Bank. The fact that on this side of the 'green line' there are 700,000 unfriendly Palestinians is not, from their point of view, sufficient reason for a poor security situation. From their point of view, the Palestinians can all go to hell, but Kiryat Arba, Ofra and Ariel will be not different from Netanya, Beer Sheba and Kfar Saba.

And therefore there is no (Israeli Army) escort on buses. However to this is added another reason: after the army started to accompany buses, the claim was raised that the settlers constituted a security burden instead of being a security factor. The daily tasks of reserve soldiers who served on the (West) Bank started to revolve around the bus schedules, and when the accompanying squad come late there were loud protests that the army was neglecting its duty. The settlers themselves decided to liberate the army from this task and finally, in order to get rid of the nickname "security burden," now there are very limited escorts for buses, mostly for those that carry pupils — and this was only done after the army stubbornly demanded it.

And perhaps here is part of the solution. It should be recognised that behind the concept that says the settlements mean secuirty there exists a reality that states that the settlements are also a security burden. And with all the ideological inconvenience that might cause the settlers, they themselves create a situation in which the (army) gives practical and uncompromising expression to the desire to maintain settlements on the (West) Bank, even if it means coating every bus with patrols and protection. This is an extreme step that carries a heavy price and it might raise second thoughts relating to the security value of the settlements. However, it ensures that (the Israeli Army) is always on the spot of events and that it — and only it — should be the body responsible for the subject of security.

The other possibility — as it is hidden in the instruction of the central command general — is much graver. It suggests that (the Israeli Army) will have to protect every Palestinian house and car. However, when the settlers don't bother to look around to check the reality in which they live and when they push the (army) into the corner, it seems there is no room for compromise or other possibilities.

(Translation: HaAretz, 25.11.83)

The West Bank is perhaps one of the only areas in the world without cultural facilities. That situation will change, however, once al-Hakawati, Palestine's premier theatre troupe, finishes work renovating a derelict cinema in East Jerusalem. *Al Fajr*'s **Awad Abdel Fattah** visited the group at work on the centre and got reactions to the project from other Palestinian artists.

Concrete Steps Towards A Theatre Centre

Hakawati actors-turned-building contractors work to renovate cinema for planned theatre arts centre./AO photo

Five weeks ago the Jerusalem-based Palestinian theatre group, al-Hakawati, started restoration of a burned out cinema in the city to transform it into an arts and theatre centre. It is the first attempt to establish a project of this kind in the occupied territories.

Al-Hakawati's seven members are hard at it in the Nuzha building which still looks more like an arson site than an arts centre. The huge and growing piles of rubble, dirt and lumps of concrete surrounding the building indicate that the actors are taking seriously their new roles as builders and contractors.

The team is out every day from the early morning until it gets dark. They estimate the project needs another two months of work.

The as yet unnamed centre has a checkered history. It is fondly remembered as the first cinema to open in Jerusalem in the 1950s. Its decline started after it was hit by an artillery shell during the 1967 war. It reopened through the 1970s until arsonists broke in two years ago and torched it — locals believe the disgruntled customers were Muslim fundamentalists making their feelings felt about the screening of pornographic movies.

They left their mark. The signs of burning are everywhere. Black ash still covers all the walls and the ceilings. Charred lumber and ruined seats are now piled up outside. It looks desolate, but engineers say the physical structure of the place has not been affected.

Despite the terrible situation of the hall, the al-Hakawati troupe is not discouraged. They speak enthusiastically about the work they have achieved and plans for the future. For them the charred shell is the first stage of the realisation of a long-cherished dream.

The process which has transformed the Hakawatis from actors to building labourers on an arts centre for Jerusalem began last February with negotiations with the Nuzha's owners. At the same time they started looking for sources of financial support to cover costs of the centre. "After we signed a 10-year lease," said Daoud Kuttab, spokesperson for the group, "we drew up a provisional programme for the centre."

Currently the scheme includes space for performances by the Hakawatis themselves and other local groups, dance and music concerts and local and international arts and cultural festivities. The building will also include space for exhibitions. They hope the proposed coffeeshop will provide a centre for artists and intellectuals to meet.

The enthusiasm bubbles and one wonders how everything is going to be crammed into the one building.

Plans are afoot for every inch of the building. The main hall is to be divided into two. Much of the rubble now outside the building came from the back of the auditorium, which has been cemented and will provide rehearsal space. The small performance hall will front a professional-size stage. Props and costumes workshops will be built below the present balcony.

Everyone has their pet ideas to throw into the pot. Some artists are pressing the Hakawatis to include a workshop in their plans. Cinema buffs are talking about the inclusion of a film club in the centre which would show progressive and regional films — at present most films shown in the West Bank are products of the Hollywood or Bombay industries, with a big dallop of karate-kitsch.

Money, of course, is the rock against which the viability of some of these pipe-dreams will be tested. According to Francois Abu Salem, the Hakawatis' director-cum-contractor, the centre will cost in the region of US$130,000, about 20 percent of which has been collected. He points out that the group has been able to make big savings in the costs of labour, as scores of theatre fans, friends of the group and members of West Bank voluntary work committees responded to calls for volunteers in local papers.

The troupe also expects financial and material support from foreign charities and foundations connected with the arts.

The importance of the arts centre is self-evident. The Hakawatis stress the contribution it will make to "national Palestinian art."

"The centre," said Radi Shehadeh, one of the members of the troupe, "will contribute to the national culture and especially to theatre." He predicted that many local theatre groups will be encouraged by its presence and access to rehearsal and stage space.

Indeed the seeds of the present project grew out of the pressing problems al-Hakawati had with finding practise halls and a base where it could store props, stage, lighting equipment and costumes.

One of the Hakawatis explained that the lack of a stable base restricted the amount of work they could do. On many occasions they were forced to delay the date or time of shows because of problems with rehearsal halls or theatres.

Despite these problems, al-Hakawati has become the best-known theatre troupe in Palestine. Over the past seven years they have performed in all parts of Palestine and travelled extensively abroad showing a number of their plays in Europe. Their position has been hard-earned and perhaps this is due to the personal efforts of each member and their determination not to give in to political and financial pressures placed on all the national arts groups.

Al-Hakawati reports that the centre will be open to all nationalist arts groups without distinctions. "One of our main purposes is to strengthen relations with all Palestinian art activists," said one member. "We believe that building an independent cultural and arts centre is part of the struggle of the Palestinians against the Israeli policy of attempting to submerge our national culture and identity."

Palestinian intellectuals and artists view the Hakawati cultural centre project as important for the development of the Palestinian national culture and theatre. Suleiman Mansour, a Palestinian artist, told *Al Fajr* that it is a good idea, "especially if there is a special place for the artists where they can meet and exhibit their works." He pointed out that Hakawati's problems are no different from those of other Palestinian artists. "A centre for arts groups," he pointed out, "could solve a great number of our problems." He expressed the hope that al-Hakawati will not stop showing their plays in Palestinian villages as they have done until recently.

Akram Haniyeh, journalist and writer, echoed almost the same sentiments. "If all the needs of the centre are met, it will be a focus of West Bank creative and cultural activities," he said.

continued from page 5

American Generosity

because before Shamir arrived in Washington, the administration made public three areas in which it expected reciprocity. The official said Israel said 'no' to all three requests. The Reagan administration had hoped to change Shamir's mind about the September 1, 1982 Reagan Peace Plan, about settlements in the occupied territories and about the now all-too-familiar surprises sprung by the Israeli government.

"I don't think governments will give each other that kind of a guarantee," the official said on the "surprises" issue. "We are both interested in avoiding surprises and in having consultations on some issues."

The Reagan Plan calls on Israel to freeze settlement activities in order to encourage Arabs to negotiate with Israel. Then-Israeli Premier Menachem Begin rejected the plan in totality and the call for a settlement freeze. Asked about the plan and the settlements, the senior official said, "Mr Shamir didn't change his position at all. This is one of the areas of disagreement..." On the settlements issue, the briefer described Israel's position as "identical in private and public. You don't get any double-track on that." In simple terms the answer is no freeze.

The official at the White House was asked what will change Israel's views about the Reagan Plan, to which he replied "by the arrival at the negotiation table of another Arab." He said that in his views "another Arab" is King Hussein of Jordan. He did not connect Israel's rejection of the Reagan Plan and Arab attendance at the negotiating table. If Jordan is to join the talks it will be on the basis, as far as Israel (and it seems the US) is concerned, of the Camp David accords. State Department spokesperson John Hughes said, December 2, that the government has not heard from any Arab government about the Shamir visit.

Lebanon

During the Shamir visit, the US reaffirmed its commitment to the May 17, 1983 Lebanon-Israel agreement. In his remarks, November 29, Reagan said both the US and Israel "agreed that every effort must be made to expedite implementation" of that agreement. Shamir said "the only basis for a settlement of the Lebanon problem is the full implementation of the May 17 agreement in all its parts."

The likelihood is dim, observers here believe, of Lebanese President Amin Gemayel managing to alter the Shamir-Reagan commitment. Once this becomes known, they believe, civil strife in Lebanon will intensify with the potential for causing major crises at the regional level. Asked about prospects for a flare-up in Lebanon, the briefing official said the "agreement is going to be workable."

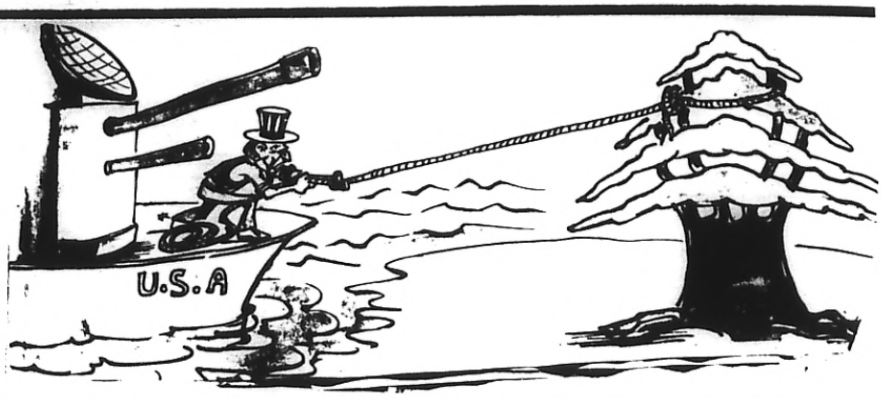
The Palestinian Quality of Life

Also mentioned by the American side was improving the Palestinian quality of life on the West Bank and Gaza. The senior official said that the US "expressed the hope that more consideration will be given to what we call developmental initiatives affecting those populations." Asked to define this, State Department spokesperson John Hughes said that it means improving the Palestinians' lot, adding that Israeli leaders are aware of US views in this regard. Hughes said that no assurances were received from the Israeli prime minister on this subject. It has been reported that the Israelis intend to relocate Palestinians from particular refugee camps on the West Bank. The State Department spokesperson said on November 22 that the US is "familiar with that proposal but has neither taken a position on it nor offered to support it." If presented to the US, he continued, "our reaction will be influenced to a large degree by the wishes of the refugees themselves" and the "position of UNRWA."

Shamir scored another success in his visit to Washington by removing US suspension of sales of cluster bombs and shells. The suspension was imposed when Israel used them in 1982 in violation of the sales agreement, which outlaws use against civilian targets. The senior official reaffirmed US commitment to Israeli security and its willingness to sell them the anti-personnel bombs pending "the conclusion of a satisfactory usage agreement that contains a definitive guarantee against violation." On the other hand, Shamir turned down a proposed Reagan plan to spend about US$300 million on a Jordanian task force to be used in the Gulf.

Shamir's visit and the latest American generosity is a landmark event in American-Israeli relations. It took place in the face of increasing Arab impotence. Not only are Arab regimes busy fighting each other but also Palestinians in Fatah are too. The American public will be displeased, commentators here believe, once they become aware of the latest 'give all — take nothing' deal. The phrase common in Washington, however, is that "national elections have already begun."

WINDOW ON THE ARAB PRESS



The military escalation between the United States and the Syrian Arab Republic, which was highlighted in the US Airforce attack on Syrian targets, the downing of two US planes and the killing of eight Marines, was the major story of the week in the local Palestinian press.

Arabic dailies published in Jerusalem and Haifa also gave prominence to the negotiations still taking place in Tripoli aimed at solving the fighting there.

On December 7, daily newspapers devoted their front page stories to the bomb explosion in an Israeli bus in West Jerusalem which killed four and injured 46.

Solidarity Day And the PLO

The celebrations during the Day of Solidarity with the Palestinian People prove the PLO is still the leader despite difficulties and existing problems. They also show international support to our people's right to self-determination and an independent state.

These facts should serve as a lesson to those who talked about the demise of the PLO. To them we say the PLO is still playing its role because it represents Palestinian aspirations. For this reason it cannot be replaced by something else unless the Palestinian people chooses to change its identity. This is something all the acts of repression did not change.

For this reason Washington and its dependents in the Middle East are fooling themselves if they believe they can pass their liquidationist schemes like the Reagan Plan and before it the Camp David agreement. Such policies are bound to fail because they lack the main ingredient — Palestinian approval.

The international support for the PLO increases its power because those who are plotting against it will now face the Palestinian people, their friends and international public opinion. This is a confrontation which those plotting to kill Palestinian rights will not be able to handle.

AL TALIA
December 1

Washington Talks

Israeli officials started making threats immediately following the conclusion of US-Israeli talks in Washington. Shamir announced that the strong cooperation between the US and Israel will help both countries achieve their goals, particularly regarding the withdrawal of "foreign" troops from Lebanon, including the Palestinian forces.

Arens is calling for a guerrilla war against Syrian troops. He is supported in this by his leader and both are planning tasks for the joint committee established during the talks in Washington.

Everyone can see that the US and Israel are preparing for a joint military adventure against the Palestinian, Syrian and Lebanese nationalists in order to implement the May 17 Lebanese-Israeli agreement and to redefine the borders of the Middle East according to the Reagan Plan.

One wonders if the Arab countries are going to learn from the Washington agreement.

AL SHA'AB
December 2

At the White House

As soon as Yitzhak Shamir and Moshe Arens ended their visit to the White House, Amin Gemayel arrived there on an official visit. If the declared reason for these two visits is strengthening bilateral relations, we feel they have further political reasons more dangerous than some people imagine.

The political implications of these two visits go beyond Lebanon to affect the Palestinian question. The right-wing Palestinian leadership is now talking about their ability to fight the political war after they have lost the military option. There is also talk critical of the Soviet Union, claiming that Soviet weapons were used in the north Lebanon fighting.

All Arab reactionaries have prepared themselves to implement their plans that follow the American plans, believing that it is time now to end the revolutionary PLO and break its relationship with the Soviet Union and other liberation movements.

The visits by the Israeli and Lebanese officials to the US are intended to revive the Camp David accords or replace it with the Reagan Plan.

AL MITHAQ
December 3

End the Adventure

Agence France Presse was sarcastic in its report of the Israeli air raid Saturday on Lebanese nationalist positions in Bhamdoun. "The sabbath is a sacred and sanctified day," it wrote. "The Israeli Army only rarely carried out military missions on the sabbath."

But it seems in the eyes of this country's rulers neither the sabbath nor human beings are sacred or sanctified. As soon as Prime Minister Shamir and his "security" minister Arens returned from Washington, they immediately started implementing a dirty and dangerous mission — the attack on positions of the Progressive Socialist Party and others in the Lebanese National Salvation Front. All this is the beginning of an all-out American-Israeli war against the Lebanese nationalists, the PLO and Syria.

The only way out of the Lebanese swamp is not by increased adventurism but by total withdrawal. This is the demand of the Lebanese people and is also in the real interests of the men serving on both sides and the Israeli and Palestinian people. It is also in the interests of peace in the Middle East.

AL ITTIHAD
December 4

An American Mercenary Army

The Shamir-Reagan talks in Washington and the escalated Israeli-American attacks on Lebanese nationalist, Syrian and PLO positions have worried the entire world, particularly following the news that the American administration plans to supply Israel with the long-range surface-to-surface Pershing 2 missiles and revealed the existance of a secret agreement between Israel and the US aimed against the Soviet Union and Syria. The supply of these missiles proves that Israel has nuclear capability.

The talks in Washington prove also that the Israeli Army is becoming an army of mercenaries in the service of American imperialist interests. Israel is also becoming an American military base to be used against liberation movements in the region and the Soviet Union.

Supplying Israel with Pershing missiles will lead to serious developments in the Middle East and force the Soviet Union to reassess the situation and redefine its policies for the region. Even Egypt announced that the recent Shamir-Reagan talks were a "disaster" and an "obstacle to peace."

King Hussein of Jordan said these talks were "disappointing" and will have a negative impact on the US position in this region.

The military-political strategic change in this region will force the Arabs to think twice before joining Western alliances that include Israel and the US.

AL ITTIHAD
December 5

The Marines' True Role

It is difficult to consider Sunday's American attack on Syrian positions separately from the results of Shamir's visit to the US. The attack reveals a new link in the chain of Israeli-American military cooperation.

Notwithstanding the statements of American officials who tried to justify the attack as defensive, all evidence indicates that it was a blatant US challenge to pave the way for US domination of this region.

The questions asked now are: What is the true role of the American troops in Lebanon? Did this force come to stabilise the country or is it part of an American Rapid Deployment Force working in Washington's interests? Can this presence still be considered neutral?

These questions ought to be answered by the Lebanese government, whose land has become a base for American aggression. As for the Syrian regime, despite all it has done to our people, it is time for it to wake up and realise the dangers surrounding it. We are saying this not out of concern for the Assad regime but for the Syrian people who are being forced by it to point their guns at their Palestinian brothers instead of the enemy.

AL FAJR
December 6

Why This Concern For Jordan?

Not a day goes by without an Israeli opposition politician inviting Jordan to join peace negotiations, as if Jordan has the key to peace and is refusing to use it.

Yitzhak Shamir once called on Jordan to join talks unconditionally. The next day he repeated the same invitation, saying the talks had to be within the framework of the Camp David accords, as if this restriction were not itself a condition.

The Camp David agreement does not concern Jordan or the Palestinian people because it does not carry either's signature. Both were also very critical of it. The ones who signed knew they did not represent Jordan or the Palestinians. Menachem Begin told his friend Anwar Sadat at one of the discussions on the accords that he does not represent either party and therefore they should not discuss the future of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Sadat was relieved and signed the agreement alone.

We have not heard the Jordanian response to the Israeli invitations but we know Jordan has always said that it is concerned over the future of the Palestinian people and their right for a homeland.

We suspect Israel is not serious about its invitations, otherwise it would have suggested a reasonable base for the negotiations. Jordan, like all the other Arab nations, is convinced that the political solution is the only way to resolve the Palestinian issue. This conviction did not come easily. From this point of view Jordan asked that representatives of the Palestinian people should join the talks.

AL QUDS
December 7

ICIPP Makes Solidarity Visit to Shaka'a

A 12-member delegation from the Israeli Council for Israeli-Palestinian Peace made a solidarity visit to Bassam Shaka'a, deposed mayor of Nablus, December 3, following the escalation of settler activities in the city last week.

During the visit, the delegation issued a demand that the authorities move settlers out of the centre of Nablus completely and not just during the night. The delegation also demanded the authorities to reopen the wholesale vegetable market, closed following an attack on a settler last week.

Uri Avneri, *HaOlam Haze* editor, told *Al Fajr*, "We went to hear in detail from Shaka'a about the situation in Nablus and the settlers' provocations in the town."

Shaka'a told *Al Fajr* that the delegation expressed readiness to join Palestinian rejection of settlements in the West Bank and in particular in Nablus. "I, in the name of the town, appreciate their precedent, and we value the mutual struggle against the occupation's policy of harassment," Shaka'a added.

Asked about how Israeli sympathisers will show solidarity, Avneri said, "We demonstrate our solidarity by making our stand known in the Israeli media. Some Israeli newspapers reported our visit to Shaka'a."

Hundreds of Israelis, members of the ICIPP and the Alternative Party, are expected to demonstrate, December 10, at Ariel settlement against the plans of Israeli Finance Minister Yoram Cohen-Orgad to build a house there. The Alternative Party, formed after the break up of Sheli, is composed of Israeli leftists who support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state and mutual recognition and negotiation between the PLO and Israel.

'There is a Limit' reads the placard of the Tel Aviv demonstration.

Yesh Gvul Say 'No' to War With Syria

Over 2000 soldiers, members and supporters of *Yesh Gvul* (There is a Limit) demonstrated in Tel Aviv, December 3, against Israel's current policy in Lebanon and increased militancy towards Syria. Demonstrators carried placards condemning the continued occupation of Lebanon and demanded an immediate withdrawal.

Haim Baram, a *Yesh Gvul* founder and spokesperson for the Alternative Party, told *Al Fajr* that the demonstration was a "success."

Most demonstrators were soldiers who refused to serve in Lebanon. Eighty of the participants served short prison sentences in military jails for refusing orders, Baram said. Soldiers who refused to serve in the West Bank also participated.

Baram expressed strong resentment against Israeli attacks on Syria and said that the current purpose of the war is to perpetuate the occupation of the Golan Heights.

Anti-Zionist Protest

Over 200 anti-Zionist Orthodox Jews demonstrated in Jerusalem, December 5, to protest the corner stone-laying ceremony at a religious settlement, Emmanuel.

The demonstrators disrupted the departure of 16 bus loads of supporters of the Agudat Israel Party who were planning to attend the Emmanuel celebration. The anti-Zionist protestors called their fellow Orthodox Jews "traitors" and lay down in front of the buses heading for the occupied territories.

Police intervened and the buses departed.

Rabbi Moshe Hirsch of the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta group questioned the value of the religious settlement: "Is the Jewish way of life uprooting olive trees and confiscating 250 dunums from the Arab neighbours of Emmanuel?" he queried.

Students Bailed on Banned Books Charge

The Beer Sheba magistrates court released two Palestinian students from the local university on bail, December 2, after they were arrested on charges of possessing illegal printed material.

The police raided rooms of Rasem Kiniat, 23, and Assem Atrash, 23, in the university hostel, November 30, and confiscated several books, pictures of PLO leaders and a Palestinian flag.

In court, the prosecutor said they found a poster from the National Progressive Movement and a booklet which included an interview with Nayef Hawatmeh, the secretary general of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine. He demanded the students be remanded for 15 days for interrogation.

Judge Shmuel Mansour, in releasing the pair on IS100,000 bail, said the police had not made it clear whether the publications were PLO produced. He said Israel is "able to defend itself against those who support the PLO."

continued from page 1

Settler Rampages

The soldiers and members of police patrols which also arrived after the settlers had fled detained four youths; Wajih Sub Laban, Imad Risheq, Rifa'at Zaitun (Ne'man's older brother) and Sabri Baraghithi on charges of stone-throwing. Residents say that the four were not involved in repelling the settlers. Rifa'at Zaitun and Sabri Baraghithi were returning from the library when they were detained, they say. The four youths spent the night in the Moscobiyya interrogation centre and were released in the afternoon of the following day.

Haj Musa Khalis, frequently the victim of settler-student attacks from the neighbouring *yeshiva*, points to a new room being added to the school illegally. "They seem to be planning to stay permanently." /AO photo

In the December 4 assault, Fayez Abu Asab, 20, was hospitalised after tear gas was sprayed in his eyes and his brother Mazen was treated for a severe beating.

Relatives of the youths said Fayez was walking down Aqbat al-Khaldiyeh street when settlers grabbed him and sprayed the gas in his face. A shopowner in the neighbourhood who declined to give his name said three settlers were involved in the attack.

The shopowner described the settler who sprayed the gas as a tall chubby man "who frequently starts trouble."

Minutes after Fayez got away from the settlers his younger brother, Mazen, who was coming up the same stairway, was grabbed by another group of settlers and beaten up. Mazen's mother said that the settlers apparently hid iron bars beneath their kaftans. Fayez was severely beaten all over his body. His condition was later described as comfortable.

The attack sparked a new round of stone-throwing in which one settler was reported slightly hurt. The stone-throwing drew Israeli soldiers and policemen who invaded the neighbourhood and chased stone-throwers. No arrests were made.

Meanwhile Fayez, whose eyes were irritated from the gas, was transferred to St John's Ophthalmic Hospital in Sheikh Jarrah and his brother Mazen to the Hospice Hospital in the Old City. The family said that Mazen, who was bruised mainly in the arms and legs, remained unconscious for nearly four hours. The family said that he did not have any broken bones but that his body was aching. Fayez was treated and released the same evening.

Israeli policemen who began an investigation into the case brought Fayez to the religious school and asked him to identify his attackers. The youth couldn't, remarking later "they all look alike." The family charged that it is possible that the settlers had smuggled the attacker over the school roof to the adjacent Jewish quarter.

Palestinian residents charge that ever since the settlers at the Birkat Avraham Yeshiva moved into the neighbourhood three years ago, they have been carrying out "systematic provocations" against them. There was a similar attack last month in which no one was injured, they say. Locals charge the settlers want to make life unbearable for them and eventually drive them out.

Six months ago the same settlers vandalised an Arab house and beat an elderly woman, Fatmeh Abu Mayaleh. Fatmeh was in a coma for several days. Boiling water was poured over her and she was beaten with blunt instruments. No one was charged with the attack. Settlers have also attacked and successfully driven out one set of neighbours.

Further afield, the same settlers were involved in an attempt to enter al-Aqsa Mosque to pray there several months ago.

Morris Zelkha, Jerusalem municipality advisor on Arab affairs, who admitted that the settlers have been the source of trouble in the city, claimed in an interview, after the first attack, that "too many legal obstacles" prevent them from moving the religious school out. The municipality has stopped the settlers building an unlicensed extra storey to their school.

After the second incident of the week, however, the municipality made the unprecedented decision to try and remove the settlers.

The Israeli municipality sent letters to the Israeli military commander of the central region, Amnon Shahak, and Israel's two chief rabbis asking them to remove the *yeshiva* from the Old City. *The Jerusalem Post* quoted a source in the municipality as saying that the issue of the Birkat Avraham school will probably be placed on the agenda of the Knesset ministerial committee on Jerusalem. Municipal sources said they were concerned that the settlers' attacks would sour relations between Palestinians and Israelis all over the city.

WEEKLY REVIEW

November 30, 1983

THREE HEBRONITES SENTENCED

TEL AVIV — Three youths from Hebron were jailed after being found guilty of stabbing a settler in Hebron two years ago.

The Ramallah military court sentenced Mahmoud Hasoneh to 14 years and Wa'il Tamimi and Akram Assieleh to 12 years.

TEACHERS THREATENED

WEST BANK — The Israeli occupation government announced it will not pay teachers in any West Bank school for the duration of any military ordered closure, informed education sources said.

COST OF TRAVEL DOCUMENTS UP

TULKARM — Israeli officials announced that the cost of travel documents for Palestinians crossing Jordan river bridges will rise by 44 percent, starting December 1.

A permit to leave the West Bank will cost IS3250 and entry permits IS3000.

LECTURE BANNED

HEBRON — The Israeli military informed the University Graduates Association in Hebron that it will not permit them to hold a lecture entitled "Medicine and Islam."

December 1, 1983

STORE ROBBED BY FAKE TAX OFFICIALS

JERUSALEM — Two Israelis entered a store in the old city claiming to be tax officials and took US$45,000 worth of silver, gold and lead. The robbers fooled a young boy minding the store on his own when they told him they were tax officials and were confiscating the goods. They left a piece of paper as a "receipt."

ISRAEL REBUILDING ANSAR CAMP

Yediot Aharanot newspaper said the Israeli military is rebuilding Ansar camp even though it is now empty after the recent prisoner exchange with the PLO. The paper said this is being done in case the camp is needed sometime in the future. More than 12,500 Palestinian prisoners went through the camp during the past 18 months, the paper added.

BODY FOUND IN TULKARM

TEL AVIV — Israeli press reports said the lower of half of a body was found in a village near Tulkarm. The top half was found in a nearby field two days ago. Israeli officials are investigating the possibility that the body belongs to an Israeli from Netanya who has been missing since May. The dead person was wearing an army uniform.

HEBRONITES SENTENCED

RAMALLAH — The Israeli military court in Ramallah sentenced Jibril Duwik, from Hebron, to five months prison and another 19 months suspended for withholding information from the military.

Hebron area resident Mohammed Ihnihen, from Halhoul, was sentenced to four months with another eight suspended for membership in a local organisation. A third Hebron citizen, Iza'at Amro, 25, was given 18 months on a military charge.

TWO JENIN RESIDENTS JAILED

JENIN — Two Jenin residents were given 10-year jail terms by the military court in the city for allegedly inciting students to demonstrate against the occupation forces. The two men, Yusef and Mahmoud Muhjem, were also charged with involvement in activities against Israeli military vehicles.

NEW WOMENS HEADQUARTERS

HEBRON — The Hebron Womens Association inaugurated yesterday their new headquarters at Wadi Abu Iktileh — Bir al-Mahjar.

NABLUS RESIDENT SENTENCED

The military court in Lydda sentenced Sami Abu Hijleh, from Nablus, to 10 years jail after finding him guilty of infiltration and underground missions in 1979. Abu Hijleh was sentenced, February 21, to four years on charges of membership in Fatah.

100S OF DUNUMS GRABBED IN BEIT FOUKIN

Military officers informed villagers in Beit Foukin, near Bethlehem, that hundreds of dunums of their land are being grabbed. No reason was given. Landowners say they plan to protest the grab.

December 2, 1983

ISRAELI ARMY PRESENCE IN WEST BANK UP

Following a meeting between Israel's defence minister, Moshe Arens, and representatives of West Bank settlements, it was announced that the Israeli Army presence in the occupied territories will increase and Palestinians who resist occupation will face increased punishments.

AL QUDS NEWSPAPER ROBBED

JERUSALEM — An estimated IS780,000 was taken from *Al Quds* newspaper offices here, according to Radio Israel. *Al Quds* says the amount taken was much less. Thieves entered the building after tying up the guard and took a safe.

APPELLANT COURTS PROPOSED

TEL AVIV — The Israeli military is discussing the possibility of opening military appellate courts in the occupied territories, *Al Hamishmar* said. So far military orders cannot be appealed.

POOR STUDENTS GET HELP

HEBRON — The Hebron General Union of Charitable Associations is planning to pay *tawjihi* exam fees for 20 students who could not afford to take the exams otherwise, Sa'ab Nadher, president of the union, said.

GRENADE ATTACK ON ISRAELI EMBASSY

TEL AVIV — A hand grenade was thrown at the Israeli Embassy in Bangkok, Thailand, causing minor damage to a compound wall.

THREE SOLDIERS KILLED IN NABATIYA

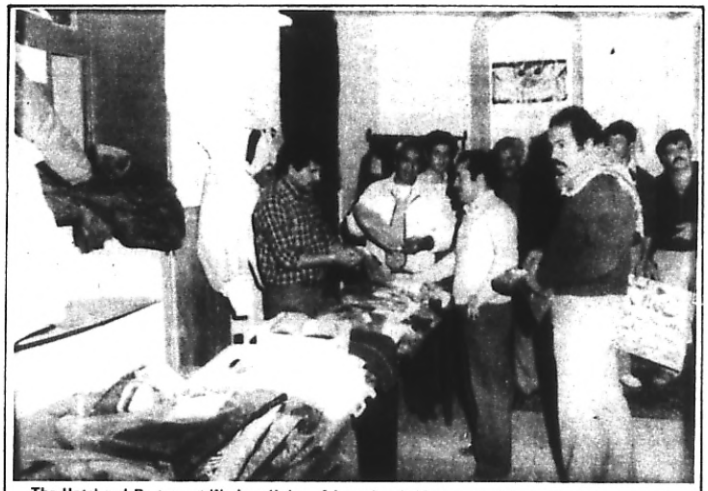
NICOSIA — The Palestine News Agency (WAFA) said here three Israeli soldiers were killed at Nabatiya, South Lebanon, and four more wounded during a guerrilla attack on an Israeli patrol there.

The agency said the Israelis opened fire after the attack, killing one citizen. A curfew was imposed on the town.

December 3, 1983

UM AL-FAHM PRO-ARAFAT

UM AL-FAHM — A demonstration was held at Um al-Fahm to mark the 36th anniversary of the partition of Palestine. Demonstrators carried placards denouncing Syrian and Libyan interference in Palestinian affairs and in support of the PLO under Yasir Arafat's leadership.



The Hotel and Restaurant Workers Union of Jerusalem held a bazaar of local Palestinian products, December 7./AO photo

DHEISHEH CAMP SURVEYED

BETHLEHEM — In what Dheisheh residents see as a first step in the implementation of Israeli minister without portfolio Mordechai Ben Porat's plan to resettle Palestinian refugees, Israeli officials started surveying their camp, near Bethlehem. The three Bethlehem-area municipalities have also been asked to find out the exact number of refugees in the camps in their areas.

GAZA ARTIST RELEASED

GAZA — Artist Fathi Ghaban, from Jabalya, was released on bail after 15 days detention on charges of drawing.

Despite the fact that the demonstraton was licensed, Israeli police broke up the protest and arrested several of its organisers from the Abna al-Balad movement.

SIDON RESISTS OCCUPATION

SIDON — Hundreds of Sidon's religious, political and union leaders waged a sit-in at the city's main mosque to protest the continued Israeli occupation of South Lebanon. One of the religious leaders called in a speech at the sit-in on the residents of South Lebanon to start organising civil resistance to the occupation.

NEW COLLEGE FOR HEBRON

HEBRON — Hebron University has received permission to open a college of agriculture, Mohammed Rashid Ja'abari, director of the board of trustees of the university, said. The college will start work in the 1984-85 academic year, Ja'abari said.

NORTHERN VILLAGES REFUSE ISRAELI SERVICES

JERUSALEM — Palestinian villages north of Nablus rejected proposals to receive eletricity from the Israeli regional power company. Instead the villages wanted to expand their local power company to be able to serve them, but the Israeli military has denied them this.

At the village of Beit Merien, villagers said the Israeli electricty company has extended cables to their village and is asking, through the Village League, for JD120 in fees for linking each house with the company generators. The village people were denied permission in the past to receive services from the Nablus company.

NABLUS COMPLAINS OF TAXES

NABLUS — Zafir Masri, chairman of the Nablus Chamber of Commerce, said his office has received several complaints of the high taxes imposed by the military government. He said the taxes do not bear any relation to people's incomes.

WEST BANK WORKERS FINED

JERUSALEM — Workers from the Hebron and Bethlehem areas were fined IS120,000 for working in Israel without a permit.

December 4, 1983

PEACE GROUPS TO VISIT WEST BANK

JERUSALEM — The anti-nuclear arms "Bethlehem Peace Pilgrimage" arrived in Haifa from Athens to conclude their 12,000 kilometre walk from Seattle

Washington state, USA, undertaken to increase anti-nuclear arms consciousness in the world.

The group, made up of 20 people ranging in age from 20 to 67 years, will walk through several West Bank cities between December 13 and 25 before concluding their walk in Bethlehem on Christmas. They began their trip in 1982 from a Trident nuclear missile base. The group held prayers and forums on the arms race in the US and Europe on their way here.

ARAFAT PRAISES WEST BANK SUPPORT

TRIPOLI — PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat said he was able to overcome difficulties in north Lebanon because of the popular support he received from the Palestinians under Israeli occupation.

ARAFAT SAYS NO TO EXILE GOVERNMENT

KUWAIT — Yasir Arafat was quoted by the Kuwaiti newspaper *Al-Qabbas* as saying he has no intention of forming a Palestinian government-in-exile after he leaves Tripoli.

HALHOUL TO START BUILDING MARKET

HALHOUL — Halhoul municipality has invited tenders for the preparation of the site of the town's proposed wholesale market. The council made the decision after it received a US$250,000 grant from American Near East Refugee Aid (ANERA).

FOUR ARRESTED ON ROBBERY CHARGES

JERUSALEM — Four people were arrested and charged with robbing *Al Quds* newspaper. One of the suspects showed the police how he and others entered the building and took a safe.

24 COME HOME

BETHLEHEM — The Israeli military approved family reunions for 24 people from the Bethlehem area.

December 5, 1983

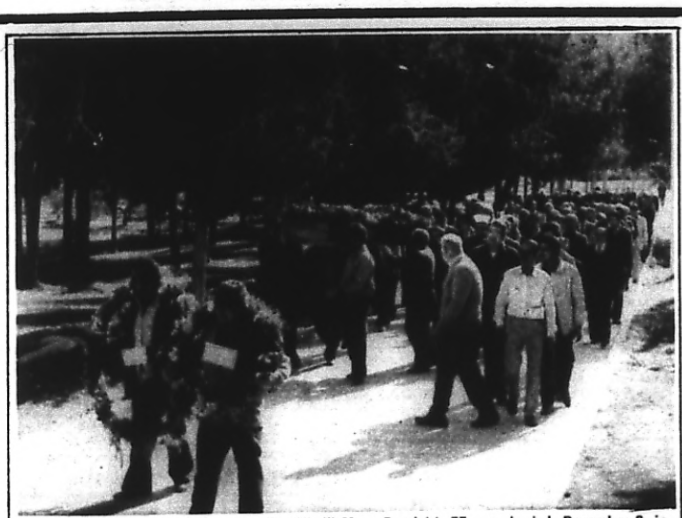
MONEY—CHANGER SHOP CLOSED

NABLUS — The shop of money-changer Ibrahim Karsua' was ordered closed for six months by the military governor of Nablus. The shop, the largest money-changing institution in the northern West Bank, was closed following a series of raids by tax officials on money-changers and jewelry stores in the city.

Meanwhile a store owned by Sa'ad Shaka'a, brother of Mayor Bassam Shaka'a, was allowed to reopen, December 2, after a months closure.

UNIONIST ARRESTED

The Israeli *Al Hamishmar* newspaper said Jerusalem unionist Shehadeh Minawi was arrested by the Israeli military.



Leading Palestinian political personality Khalil Musa Boudeiri, 77, was buried, December 6, in Jerusalem in Bab al-Asbat cemetery following funeral ceremonies at al-Aqsa Mosque. Boudeiri, an eye doctor who died of a heart attack, December 5, had been a prominent political activist all his life.

The paper said Minawi, secretary general of the Federation of Workers Unions in the West Bank, was held for 24 hours because he attended a pro-Yasir Arafat rally. The Israeli Army raided the meeting and forced participants to leave, arresting Minawi in the process.

RELIGIOUS MAN SENTENCED

GAZA — The Israeli military court in Gaza sentenced local Imam Hijazi Barbar to 18 months jail and another 18 months suspended on charges of inciting the worshippers during a Friday sermon at the mosque four months ago.

December 6, 1983

TWELVE YOUTHS ARRESTED AT ARROUB

Israel Radio said 12 Palestinian youths from Arroub refugee camp, near Hebron, were arrested on suspicion of stoning Israeli vehicles.

HEBRON JAIL STRIKE CONTINUES

JERUSALEM — The strike declared by political prisoners at Hebron jail entered its fifth month. The strike was called because of the bad treatment the prisoners receive and restrictions imposed on them in jail.

One of the prisoners, Dr Ibrahim Abu Hillal, has been suffering severe back and ear pains but has not received treatment yet.

Meanwhile, political prisoners in Jenin struck last Saturday demanding better food and hygenic conditions in the jail. They also struck a week earlier, protesting an order banning them from going out to the exercise yard.

ISRAELI BUS STONED

TEL AVIV — Israel Radio said an Israeli bus from Binyamin settlement was stoned in Ramallah. Settlers on the bus chased the attackers but were not able to apprehend them. The army was called to the scene, the radio said. Several bus windows were broken in the stoning.

GUSH EMUNIM WANTS ARAB HOMES

TEL AVIV — *Davar* reported that a Gush Emunim group in the Old City of Jerusalem asked the defence ministry to give them three buildings in the Muslim Quarter. The paper said the settlers are exerting "enormous pressure" on the government to expand their influence in the city.

UNRWA SCHOOLS TO BE MOVED

Israel's army radio said the military government intends to move UNRWA schools into Palestinian camps in the West Bank in an attempt to stop stoning of Israeli vehicles.

16 SETTLEMENTS IN WEST BANK

AMMAN — The Jordanian department of occupied territories affairs said that Israel has established 16 settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip since the beginning of the year.

TWO PRISONERS GET EXTENDED SENTENCES

RAMALLAH — Two Palestinian prisoners, Kaiyed Amro, from Dura, serving 14 years, and Mohammed Shehadeh, from Kalandia, serving 10 years, both for political offences, were sentenced to an additional four years after they attempted to escape from Ramallah prison.

Poll Puts Arafat on Top

Support for Yasir Arafat is virtually unanimous in the occupied territories, according to an opinion poll conducted by *Al Bayader al-Siyasi* in late November. The poll also found support for dialogue between the PLO, Jordan and Egypt and for contacts with progressive Israelis. A majority opposed a political settlement based on an amalgamation of UN Security Council Resolution 242 and the September 1, 1982 Reagan Plan.

The poll of 1184 people in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank showed 49-76 percent backing for Arafat and big majorities for "dialogue" between Palestinians and Jordanians and Egyptians. The poll, conducted November 24-30, 1983, showed a slight increase in support for Arafat since the late survey in July, this year.

THE RESULTS

Question 1:	Do you support the continuation of the leadership of Yasir Arafat in the Palestinian March?	
	Yes:	1122 (94.76%)
	No:	42 (3.55%)
	No opinion:	20 (1.69%)
Question 2:	Do you demand the resumption of the Jordanian-Palestinian dialogue?	
	Yes:	832 (70.27%)
	No:	297 (25.08%)
	No opinion:	55 (4.65%)
Question 3:	Do you demand an Egyptian-Palestinian dialogue?	
	Yes:	783 (62.33%)
	No:	359 (30.32%)
	No opinion:	87 (7.35%)
Question 4:	Do you support the amalgamation of UN Resolution 242 and the Reagan Initiative as a prelude to a political settlement?	
	Yes:	513 (43.33%)
	No:	558 (47.13%)
	No opinion:	113 (9.54%)
Question 5:	Do you support that Egypt, Jordan and the PLO should enter talks for a settlement on agreed broadlines between them?	
	Yes:	715 (60.39%)
	No:	369 (31.25%)
	No opinion:	100 (8.45%)
Question 6:	Do you support the continuation of the Palestinian contact with Israeli peace forces?	
	Yes:	693 (58.53%)
	No:	382 (32.26%)
	No opinion:	109 (9.21%)

Jordan's monarch has hinted recently that he might reactivate his parliament, dormant since 1974. **Abu Bishara** examined the history of parliamentarianism in Jordan for *Al Fajr* and spoke to ex-members and other West Bankers about their experiences with Jordan-style polls.

Dusting off the Jordanian Parliament

West Bank political circles have been buzzing during the past few weeks with discussion of the official "hints" that the Jordanian parliament might be reactivated. The parliament was frozen back in 1974, after the Arab Summit in Rabat named the PLO as the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people. Most Palestinians oppose the Jordanian plans.

The Jordanians have been less than direct about their intentions. The rumours started when an interview King Hussein gave a Kuwaiti newsaper was read aloud on Jordanian television. The Hashemite monarch mentioned *inter alia* the possibility of the return to "parliamentary life" as a partial answer to questions about providing a forum for opinion in Jordan.

Hussein returned to the subject in a speech given at an army graduation ceremony, again transmitted on the nightly television news. He stated explicitly that he intended to return the Jordanian parliament to action. Jordanian sources say the plan will start with the formal dissolution of the 60-member Jordanian parliament and preparations for new elections.

The issue is controversial here because unless the structure of parliament is changed, half its seats should be filled West Bankers. According to the plans as they stand at present, Jordan will not attempt to get Israeli cooperation for a new poll here. Former members will retain their seats and those who have died since the last poll in 1966 will be replaced by the candidates who came second. (see box)

The Jordanian hints are more than simply a propaganda measure. *Al Talia* reported on its front page, December 1, that a member of Jordan's consultative council, the selected body which Hussein set up to take the place of parliament, is touring the West Bank at present offering pro-Jordanian figures seats in the new parliament.

While the plans have not been formally coordinated they have not gone unnoticed by Israeli politicians and media. Israel TV reported King Hussein's speech and interviewed an Israeli official who welcomed the move as a Jordanian initiative "to pick up the pieces after the PLO's collapse in Tripoli." Israel's English language daily *The Jerusalem Post* published an analysis of the move, calling it "a prelude to eventually joining the American-sponsored negotiations over the West Bank."

No West Bank Palestinian figure has come out publicly in favour of the new Jordanian moves. The basis of opposition stems from the fact that it clearly contradicts the resolutions of the 1974 Arab Summit in Rabat. In suspending the parliament at that time, Hussein unequivocally stated his position on the future of the West Bank. "Things have changed principally now — the West Bank is no longer Jordanian and we have no place in any negotiations for its future," Hussein told *The New York Times* on November 4, 1974.

Many West Bankers consider moves regarding the reconvening of the parliament and the proposed role for Palestinians within it as a Jordanian attempt to ditch earlier pronouncements and take a direct role in the future of the West Bank. Bashir Barghouti, editor of *Al Talia*, explains that "Jordan is taking advantage of the situation in Tripoli to make a big move to bypass the PLO."

George Hazboun, the former Deputy Mayor of Bethlehem, is not overly surprised about this. Jordan, he says, always exploits weaknesses in the national movement. "After Black September (in 1970), he tried to reactivate the Higher Arab Council and the United Kingdom (of the West Bank and Jordan) plan," says Hazboun. "After Beirut he talked about confederation, and now he is trying to lay a cornerstone for the Reagan Plan in coordination with Shamir's visit to the US."

What is not being stated explicity but is quite clear nonetheless in the plan to reactivate parliament is the question of sovereignty. Former Jordanian Defence Minister Anwar Nusseibeh referred to just that when he said, "It is obvous that when you talk about returning to parliamentary life you are talking about sovereignty."

Even the most enthusiastic supporters of the Jordanian plan hope it is merely a diplomatic move and not a move to set any kind of representative scheme. Older Palestinians here can clearly recall election days during Hashemite rule.

Khalil Silwani, a Jerusalem lawyer who was elected to the Jordanian parliament in 1962, says, "Every now and then the Jordanian government allowed free elections to show the Americans and the Israelis what the people thought." But the parliament to which Silwani was elected lasted just five months. "Our parliament withdrew its confidence in the Cabinet and the King dissolved us," he recalls.

An earlier parliament, headed by Suleiman Nabulsi in 1956, lasted a little longer. Issam Fayez described it in his book *The Hashemite Regime and the National Rights of the Palestinians*: "The Nabulsi national government saw for the first time in any Arab parliament two Communist members (from Jerusalem) and a Ba'athist. One of its first acts was to declare cultural unity with Syria and Egypt and cancel the Jordanian-British agreement. After a year of political freedom, the Hashemite ruler moved, dissolving the parliament, declaring martial law and arresting political activists, many of them members of parliament."

Another book entitled *A Year in Jordan's Struggle*, by the Jordanian National Struggle Vanguard, accuses the Jordanian Army of unconstitutional actions during the dissolution. "Emergency regulations were actually enforced four hours before they were made public by radio in violation of Clause 125 of the Jordanian Constitution," they write.

Other forms of repression and unconstitutional activities were documented: "In a parliamentary session of February 18, 1958, while King Hussein was present, 17 members were not permitted to speak or give their opinions despite having registered to speak. Furthermore the parliamentary record shows that all members of the parliament approved King Hussein's 'Arab Unity Proposal' while everyone who attended the session swore no vote was held."

The Jordanian National Assembly consists of two representative bodies, the Senate and the Parliament. The last parliament had 60 members, 30 from each side of the Jordan River. According to law, each district has a number of Christian or Muslim members, depending on the number of adherents in the district. Hebron had five Muslim representatives, Bethlehem had two Christians and two Muslims.

Palestinians interviewed here explain that except at odd times when the regime allowed parties, the establishment in Amman basically decided who the members of parliament would be, despite the elections.

George Hazboun, of Bethlehem, remembers the case of one of his distant relatives who was elected to the Jordanian parliament for the Bethlehem district. "Hazboun George Hazboun came from Amman and told his relatives that Wasfi Tal, Jordan's former prime minister, had told him that he wanted him to represent Christians in Bethelehem," said George Hazboun. When relatives told him that he didn't stand a chance in the poll, Hazboun George Hazboun informed them that his Amman friend had told him not to worry, just to put himself up and he would make it. Sure enough, despite the fact that few people in Bethlehem knew him, he received the majority of votes in the 1962 poll.

Al Sabah Jordanian weekly magazine told similar stories after the 1972 elections. "The votes of the citizens have become a commodity that can be bought and sold without any legal consequences," *Al Sabah* wrote on September 4, 1972.

Once ensconced, such 'representatives' could have had little expectation that their voices would be heeded. A cursory look at the records of the Jordanian parliament confirms this. Parliamentary minutes for the October 1, 1958 to January 31, 1959 session show that government ministers simply did not answer 11 out of 18 official questions they were asked in the chambers.

Some Palestinians argue that Jordan never had the legal right to annex the West Bank to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Researcher Kamila Badr argues that according to international law, Jordan's annexation of the West Bank in 1950 was illegal. Badr's thesis as outlined is a soon to be published by Jerusalem's Arab Studies Centre under the title *Legal Analysis of Self-Rule in the West Bank*. In it she reconstructs Jordanian moves which led up to the amendment of the Jordanian Constitution and the parliamentary elections in the West Bank on April 11, 1950.

"After the army occupied the West Bank, four conferences were held in Amman, Jericho, Nablus and Ramallah. Invitations to the conferences were issued by Jordanian military governors." Badr explains that these conferences were not representative of the population and had no legal value. The East Bank government accepted the recommendations of the conferences and amended the constitution to allow West Bank representation and therefore *de jure* annexation. Badr explains that only Iraq and Great Britain recognised the annexation.

Alan Gerson, an international law expert, also comments on the West Bank's legal status: "The establishment of Israel is legitimate, based on the 1947 partition plan. But the sovereignty of the Arab state which was specified in the partion plan has remained unresolved." Its sovereignty belongs to its inhabitants, and the Hashemite crown's annexation of it means at best placing it under "mandate" status.

Kamila Badr argues that even as a mandate government, Jordan did not follow internationally accepted rules "because it did not develop a distinct personality for this area. Instead Jordan worked at destroying any elements of a special personality." She concludes, "Jordan has lost its legal right to return as a mandate ruler until the future sovereignty of the area is permanently decided."

The last parliamentary elections in the West Bank occurred April 15, 1967. According to Jordanian law, the 30 members returned then have continued to officially represent their districts despite the freeze of the parliament in 1974 after the Rabat Arab Summit declared the PLO the sole legitimate representative of the Palestinian people.

Since April 1967, seven MPs have died. Three were replaced before the freeze. According to Edward Khamis, a Bethlehem district MP, the Jordanian Constitution was amended before 1974 allowing the parliament itself to appoint replacements for West Bank MPs who either died or were unable to continue their duties.

Al Fajr prints below the results of the last parliamentary poll in the West Bank from the official Jordanian gazette. Religious status and present place of residence are given in parentheses.

Jerusalem District (with Jericho)

Kamal Araqat (Muslim, Amman)
Emile Ghori (Christian, Amman)
Muhi al-Din Hussein (Muslim, Amman)
Dr Amin Majaj (Christian, Jerusalem)
Misbah Qathmi (Muslim, Jerusalem)
Abdallah J'eth (Muslim, deceased — replaced by Tahir Masri, Nablus)
Saleh Abd al-Qadr Thamen (Muslim, Amman)
Hafthi Malhies (Muslim, Alexandria, Egypt)

Bethlehem District

Mohammed Salem Thweib (Muslim, deceased)
Hanna Farah Banoura (Christian, Beit Sahour)
Edward Khamis (Christian, Beit Jala)
Musa Issa Abdeh (Muslim, deceased)

Jenin District

Suleiman Ahmad Rashid (Muslim, Amman)
Fawzi Jarar (Muslim, deceased — replaced by Maher Rashid)
Mohammed Tahir Kilani (Muslim, Amman)

Hebron District

Ramadan Hijeh (Muslim, Dura)
Sidqi Ja'abari (Muslim, Hebron)
Mohammed Othman Abu Sabha (Muslim, Yatta)
Ismael Hijazi (Muslim, Amman)
Hafez Abd al-Ghani (Muslim, Hebron)

Tulkarm District

Mohammed Said Yunis (Muslim, deceased)
Abdallah Faid (Muslim, deceased — replaced by Khalid Fiad)
Sharif Yusef Qabaj (Muslim, Tulkarm)

Nablus District

Abd al-Rauf Faris (Muslim, Nablus)
Abd al-Qadr Saleh (Muslim, Nablus)
Abd al-Karim Mfadi (Muslim, Nablus)

Ramallah District

Qasim Rimawi (Muslim, deceased)
Ali Daoud Rimhi (Muslim, Amman)
Abd al-Salem Ghori (Muslim, Amman)
Issa Aqel (Christian, Ramallah)